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THE

WORKS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON,

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

IN THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

FOURTH EDITION,

INCLUDING HIS COLLECTED LETTERS.

VOL. II.

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THE

ROOT OF POPERY STRUCK AT,

AND THE

TRUE ANCIENT APOSTOLIC FOUNDATION DISCOVERED;

IN SOME

PROPOSITIONS TO THE PAPISTS,

CONCERNING

FALLIBILITY AND INFALLIBILITY,

WHICH

CUT DOWN THE UNCERTAIN, AND MANIFEST THE CERTAIN WAY OF RECEIVING AND GROWING UP INTO THE TRUTH.

ALSO

Some CONSIDERATIONS concerning the True and False CHURCH and MINISTRY, with the State of each since the days of the APOSTLES,

Held forth in true Love and Pity to the Souls of the PAPISTS, that they may Hear and Consider and not Mistake and Stumble at the ROCK OF AGES, whereupon the PROPHETS, APOSTLES, and whole FLOCK of GOD throughout all Generations, have been built.

There is likewise somewhat added concerning the GROUND of ERROR, and the Way to TRUTH and UNITY, for the Sake of such as are more Spiritual, and have been more inwardly exercised in searching after TRUTH.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. Mat. xv. 9.

Vol. II.—1

PREFACE.

THE mystery of iniquity (which overspread the earth under the shape and appearance of holy church, and holy worship) did begin to work in the apostles' days. 2 Thes. ii. 7. And this was the way whereby the god of this world did deceive; he endeavored to blind men's minds, to put out their right eye, 2 Cor. iv. 4. to draw from the Spirit, from the anoiuting, 1 John ii. 26. to rob of the eye-salve wherewith the eye must be anointed to see the things of God. Rev. iii. 18. And now when he hath done this, how easily may his false ware pass for true! His synagogue (built in the likeness of the true church, Rev. iii. 9.), for the true church! Antichrist, his son (sitting in the temple like Christ, 2 Thes. ii. 4.), for the true Christ! His doctrines, for the true teaching! Mat. xv. 2. His feigned, formal, dead, earthly traditions, for the true, everlasting gospel! Rev. xiv. 6. His Gentiles, or Heathens (who are so in nature, and Christians only in name), for the true Christians! Rev. xi. 2.

"The light of the body is the eye," saith Christ, by way of parable. Mat. vi. 22, 23. Now if the eye be dark, "if the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" How shalt thou see the gospel, the church, the Spirit, the things of God? But if that eye be clear, who shall be able to blind thee? The devil may come with his deceits, his false church, his false gospel, his false power, &c., yea, though his spirit creep into the very true form of godliness, thou wilt be able to discern him there. But if thou see with another's eye, thou mayst easily see amiss, mistake Christ, mistake the church, and so believe as the false church believes, and fare as the false church fares.

Oh! who shall redeem the deceived nations back to the Spirit? Who shall preach to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, the everlasting gospel? Who shall open the eye in them which hath been so long blinded? Who shall take the golden cup of fornication from their lips, and loosen their hearts from the sorceries, flatteries, and enchantments of the false woman?

The everlasting bowels of the Lord roll toward his poor captivated seed, and towards the poor deceived nations; and he is now preparing to build the ruins of many generations. He is bringing forth that power of truth, that demonstration of his Spirit in the spirits of his people, as no paint shall be able to stand before. He will rend the veil of the covering from off all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall be seen by the eye which he opens and anoints; and that which hath deceived, and destroyed, and led from the truth, building up a mystery of unrighteousness in the stead of it; even the beast and false prophet (which wrought miracles, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image), shall be taken, and cast alive into the lake. Rev. xix. 20. Then captivity shall be led captive; and those which have been led captive shall creep out of their dens, and out of their holes, into the light of the living, and worship the true and everlasting King, when the king Abaddon is destroyed. Rev. xv. 2, 3, 4.

Oh! who shall be accounted worthy to be taught by the Lord where to wait for this? To whom will the Lord discover the place of wisdom (the place where wisdom is learned, her voice heard, and her instructions to life received), which is hid from the eyes of all living? Job xxviii. 21. Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? They are them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts of the false woman. Isai. xxviii. 9. and chap. lii. 15. They that are turned from man, from the fleshly wisdom in themselves, towards the spring of life, they may hear the voice of this wisdom, which begins in the living fear and power; which effectually turns the heart from death and darkness towards

the living God; to worship him in spirit and in truth, according to the pure, living teachings thereof; and not after the inventions, imaginations, and traditions of men: and he that is once come hither, as he is true and faithful to the light of life, doing the will as it is made manifest to him, shall know more and more of the doctrine, John vii. 17. and have his feet infallibly guided into, and preserved in, the way of peace.

The Root of Popery struck at.

PROPOSITION I.

THAT councils may err (if I should add, and have erred, it might not be impossible to prove it).

First, In that they are men not perfected in the knowledge, faith, and obedience of the truth, it necessarily implies a capacity of error, both in relation to the knowledge, to the faith, and to the obedience.

Secondly, Their doubtful disputation of things, and long canvassing, imply an uncertainty, and possibility of erring.

Thirdly, Their way of determining things at last (which is by a vote of the major part) is an uncertain way of determination; for it is not impossible but the major part may be over-swayed by by-ends, and in relation to their own advantage and interest, against the righteousness and equity of the reason of the lesser part: so that the way of determining things by a council is not a certain way in itself; but because men know not well how to find out a better and more probable way of deciding controversies, they judge it necessary to acquiesce therein. But the votes and determinations of men concerning a thing do not conclude a thing to be true or false in itself; they only signify their

opinion, judgment, and testimony concerning the thing, the validity whereof depends upon their knowledge of the thing; which if it be not clear, full, and certain, their testimony, opinion, or judgment is of little value. Truth remains the same in itself, though all the wise men in the world should testify against it, calling it error, or heresy; and falsehood can never become truth, though ever so many wise men should testify for it, putting the fairest habit and appearance of truth upon it that they can.

PROP. II. That the pope himself may err.

The pope hath not greater freedom from fallibility in judgment or doctrine than Peter himself had. Now Peter had not only a capacity of error in him, but he did err in that doctrine which he taught the Gentiles, of living after the manner of the Jews; for he did not only do the thing itself, Gal. ii. 12. but he compelled the Gentiles to do the same thing, holding it forth as a practice which ought to be observed by the Gentiles, ver. 14. for which carriage of his, Paul withstood him to the face, and said, "he was to be blamed." ver. 11. And the council of Constance, deposing pope John, and advancing the authority of councils above the pope, did plainly imply that the pope might err; which might further be confirmed by what the council of Basil determined concerning pope Eugenius.

PROP. III. That every man may err in his interpretation of scriptures, further than he hath a certain and infallible opening of them to his spirit, by that Spirit which gave them forth. The Spirit knoweth his own mind in every word which he hath spoken; but no man knoweth his mind, nor the meaning of his words, but as he reveals them. 1 Cor. ii. 11. So that God is true in all his sayings in the scriptures; but man is a liar in all the meanings he gives of his sayings, according to his own guessings, reasonings, and imaginings, without the Spirit's infallible opening of his own words to him. So that the Spirit itself is the ground and foundation of all true light and knowledge of the things of God.

PROP. IV. That if there be any light to be found any

where shining from God, that light cannot err: for God is pure; and that which comes immediately from him cannot but be pure. All the knowledge which man gathers, or can gather, into his vessel, he may pollute; but what issues from the spring is pure, and of a perfect nature. James i. 17.

PROP. V. That there must necessarily be such a light communicated to all men since the fall, that they may believe thereby, come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved; which I prove thus:

1. From the will of God. The apostle saith expressly, that "God would have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4. Why then there must necessarily be somewhat dispensed from God to all men, sufficient to bring them to the "knowledge of the truth," that they may be "saved."

2. From what is found in man. There is found in man a light shining in his darkness, John i. 5. a light discovering the darkness, and drawing from it; somewhat which checks and reproves the sinner, but never consented to the evil of his heart and ways. This is of God; this is from God; this is pure; this is spiritual; not of the fleshly, not of the natural; for then it might be drawn some time or other to consent to some of the corrupt desires of the natural; but though the conscience be ever so much defiled, yet the light in itself can never be defiled. Indeed a man may set up that for light in his conscience, which may be darkness; but God's light, God's witness there, can never be bribed, but will speak truly, (when God at any time awakeneth, or raiseth it up) witnessing for him, both against the evil of the man, and against the searedness, hardness, and unfaithfulness of his conscience towards God.

PROP. VI. That this being let in, believed in, and obeyed, shineth more and more unto the perfect day; even until it hath wholly brought out of the error into the truth. Every way of it is infallible, and every step of the creature after it is infallible. Indeed the creature's reasonings and consultations about it may be fallible; but the light is infallible in itself; and so far as there is a pure, simple, naked thing be-

gotten by it (for it is of a begetting nature, James i. 17, 18.), so far there is an acknowledgment of its certainty in the creature. There are some things that all the men of the earth certainly know to be evil, by means of its shining; and some things also that they certainly know to be good; and at some times there is a will begotten in them towards the good, and against the evil: now if they did honestly wait in the singleness of this will, breathing to the God of power to have it brought to victory in them, the light would shine more and more from his presence; and in the light, the power and saving arm would arise; which would effectually lead out of the death and captivity, into the fellowship and freedom of the life.

Prop. VII. That nothing less can lead unto eternal life than an eternal light in man's spirit, where the darkness is; which is to be discovered there, subdued there, and to be led from. This was the apostle's message (who received and came with the message of the gospel), "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." 1 John i. 5. And this they preached to bring men into fellowship with this light, ver. 3. that they might walk with God in it, and there be cleansed by the blood of Jesus through it. ver. 7. Which that they might obtain, they must first be turned from darkness to it, Acts xxvi. 18. and from the power and kingdom of Satan to the seed of the kingdom of God, Mat. xxiii. 31. which Christ told the Pharisees was within them. Luke xvii. 21. And the Apostle Paul told the Hebrews, that the laws of the covenant, whereof Christ was the Minister and Mediator, were by the tenor of the new covenant, to be written in the heart and mind by the Spirit; and not to be written outwardly, as that covenant was which God made with the Jews by Moses, Heb. viii. 6, &c. which was not the eternal covenant itself, but a shadow of it; which made nothing perfect, but only made way for the hope of a better covenant, by which believers draw nigh to God. Heb. vii. 19. Yea, Moses himself tells the Jews, that the commandment of life, the Word Eternal (according to faith wherein, and obedience whereto, they were to live or die eternally) was

within them. Deut. xxx. 14, 15. And Paul tells the church at Rome, that this was the word of faith which they preached; that it was also the covenant of life and death under the gospel. Rom. x. 8. Christ is the light of the world, John viii. 12. or the Eternal Word, John i. 1. which Light or Word speaks within every man's conscience. He that believes in it, brings his deeds to it, and obeys it, is justified by it; but he that hates its reproof, is condemned by it, John iii. 20, 21. and not only shut out of life, but out of the very ways to it; for the reproofs of the instruction of this wisdom are the sole way or path of life to the sinner. Prov. vi. 23.

Now behold the true certainty of the everlasting foundation, and behold your own uncertainty. See the Rock of ages, whereupon the prophets, apostles, and all the saints have been built. See that which indeed is infallible; and cease from man, who is vain, and subject to vanity and error. The church of the Jews did err; the churches of the Gentiles also did err, even in the apostles' days; insomuch as their candlestick was threatened to be removed, and was soon removed; yea, the apostle particularly foretold the saints at Rome concerning the Gentiles, that their standing was by faith; and that if they continued not in God's goodness, they should also be cut off, as the Jews were. Rom. xi. 20, 22. Now there was not a standing in the faith, but a general backsliding, and falling away from the faith; and then the man of sin was revealed, and Christ and his truth withdrawn; strong delusion, deceit, and false appearances of truth starting up instead thereof. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 11. For the Lord God, upon the great defection and apostasy of the Gentiles, separates the outward court from his temple, altar, and spiritual worshippers; which temple was his true church, which he reserved for himself, giving the outward court to the Gentiles. Rev. xi. 1, 2. And then the true church fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God for her; and so the Gentile-Christians could build up their false churches in the cities or palaces where the true church had been built by God, and appeared before. And these

false churches may easily become much larger than the true church ever was; for while the Lord built the church by his Spirit, he built only of spiritual stones, 1 Pet, ii. 5. adding to it such as he first converted. Acts ii. 47. For such alone are fit to worship him in Spirit and truth, and such alone he seeks out to make up his church of, instead of the Jews, whom he had cast off from being a church and people to him. John iv. 23. But when man comes to build, he takes in more largely than God allows; he may gather in or force a whole city or nation to become a church, by persuading or compelling them to receive the doctrine and tradition which he prescribes, and by setting up an outward knowledge, policy, and government, according to man, and in the wisdom of man, which the human part will answer to, and be satisfied with. To make this a little more manifest to such as in simplicity of heart desire to know the mind of God in this respect, and the true state of the church since the days of the apostles, consider these things following:

1. God, in those days, sent his true apostles and ministers with the everlasting gospel, which was the word of faith which they preached, to gather men of Jerusalem, Judea, and all nations, into the obedience of the faith, Rom. i. 5. that he might have a spiritual house, a spiritual people, to worship him, instead of those outward worshippers whom he then cast off. John iv. 23.

2. That this gathered people in Judea, at Jerusalem, at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Coloss, at Philippi, at Rome, &c. were his several churches or congregations; and not the city of Jerusalem, not the city of Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, &c. None of these were churches; but only a select remnant gathered out of these.

3. That the devil, after he had stirred up the Jews every where, and the heathens as much as he could, to cry out against the truth, and such as God had converted to the faith, for heresy and a sect, and to persecute them and it, yet could not prevail that way; then he tried another way, sending his messengers abroad, clothing them as angels of light; teaching them also to preach Christ, and the doctrine

of the gospel; and so transforming themselves under this color, secretly to sow the seeds of division, error, and heresy in the church.

4. When this would not do, but these were discovered and judged (by the power and presence of the light of the Spirit in the church) for false Jews, false apostles, deceitful workers, ministers of Satan, &c., Rev. iii, 9. and chap. ii. 8. then they separate themselves from the church, Jude 19. and make up a body of their own, go out into the world, preach there, gather a company there, get the greater number, and then set upon the church, fight with her, overcome her and her ministry, and get up their own false church and ministry. Thus the synagogue of Satan and his ministry got footing in the world, even in the very same cities and places where the church had newly had dominion before. And now, whereas before there was a church at Jerusalem, a church at Rome, a church at Ephesus, &c., when the synagogue of Satan is set up, and hath got the dominion there, the whole city of Jerusalem, or the whole city of Rome, &c. can then become a church. To make this yet more manifest, observe and weigh these things following in the balance of the true sanctuary:

1. The false prophets, the false apostles, which had crept into the church, Jude 4. which strove to seduce the church, 1 John ii. 26. these went out from the church, ver. 19. and went into the world. 1 John iv. 1.

2. When they went out into the world, their intent was to leaven the world with their doctrine, and to gather people after them. They preached to gather people to them, and their doctrine, and form of godliness, as the apostles preached to gather people to God, and his living truth.

3. The world heard them; they hearkened to their doctrine; were willing to be gathered by them, owning their false ministry, and their false church, or synagogue; even as those that were of God hearkened to the apostles, and owned the truth. 1 John iv. 6. So that here were now two distinct bodies in cities and places where the gospel had come: a body of the true saints and true apostles; a body

of the false apostles and ministers, of the deceitful workers, who showed miracles and wonders, and had all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness on their side. 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. Thus there was a great division and breach in the places where the gospel had been preached, and had reigned in power: for he that was of God heard the true apostles, and kept to the true church; but those that were not of God, but of the worldly spirit, heard the false apostles and false ministers, and so joined to the synagogue of Satan, 1 John iv. 6. where Satan had his seat and dwelling, Rev. ii. 13. even as Christ dwelleth and sitteth in his temple, the church.

4. These false apostles and ministers, with the help of the world, which they had gathered in unto them, joined together against the true church and her seed (as wherever the two contrary spirits and principles appear, they cannot but contend and fight against each other; the one for the faith and truth of the gospel; the other against that which is true, and for a counterfeit of it); so, Rev. xii. there is Michael and his angels fighting on the side of the true church; there is the dragon and his angels fighting for the false church. Now mark who prevails: the true church, Michael and his angels, prevail one way; the false church, the synagogue of Satan, the dragon and his angels. prevail another way.

Quest. How doth the true church prevail?

Ans. Thus: she keeps all the spiritual, invisible, holy things of God from the paw of the dragon, and of all those false worshippers. The invisible Jew, the invisible life and power, that whereof God had built up his church, is preserved by him; and against his life and Spirit, and his church (which he builds by his Spirit, and preserves in it), all the powers of darkness cannot prevail; but do they all what they can, the man-child is caught up to God; and the church, by God's help, flies from the face of the dragon into the wilderness, where she is fed forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, which is the time of the dragon's

prevailing outwardly, by his false church and ministry. Rev. xii.

Quest. How doth the dragon and false church prevail?

Ans. By putting the man-child and true church to flight; by gaining the church's ground, setting up his synagogue (or false representation of the true church) where the true church had stood before. For the true church being fled into the wilderness, the field was left to him; and there he sets up his false synagogue, in the sight of the world, calling her the true church, and her seed the true catholics; but casting a flood of reproach after the woman, reviling her (who indeed was the true church) for a strumpet, and all her seed for seducers, schismatics, heretics, &c., even such as were not fit to be suffered in the earth, but to be made war with, both by the spiritual and civil sword. Rev. xii. 15, 17.

Thus then was the victory on each hand: the true church and temple (with the inward power of life) was preserved by God; who caused it, by the wings of his Spirit, to fly out of the sight of false worshippers and imitators, as far as that is from the sight of men in a city, which flieth out of the city into a wilderness. And to the other is left the outward court to worship in; the profession, the attire, the garments, the visible observations and practices wherein the church before had appeared, and in which she did once truly and spiritually worship; for the church did acceptably worship in the outward court, before it was measured and divided from the inward temple, and given to the Gentiles. Rev. xi. 2.

Quest. Now how long was this false church to stand?

Answ. Till the church's coming out of the wilderness in the same Spirit and power wherewith she fled into the wilderness. When Christ comes with the fiery breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his eternal light, then this false image of the church melts and dissolves away. 2 Thess. ii. 8. But till then she keeps her seat on the beast; on whom she rides, and by virtue of whom she sits upon the waters, even upon peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. Rev. xvii. 15.

Object. But did not Christ say the gates of hell should not prevail against his church?

Answ. No more they did not: for she had wings of an eagle given her, to fly into the wilderness; into the place prepared of God for her; into which she did fly, and was there fed and preserved, do all the powers of darkness what they could. So that the dragon and his angels prevailed not against the woman; but she was hid from the face of the serpent, and from all his spite and power, who could not come within the bounds of her heaven in the wilderness, but was cast out into the earth, and his angels with him. Rev. xii. 8, 9. But Christ did not say that the gates of hell should not prevail against her outward estate; but the contrary, in this very prophecy of John, is here declared; to wit, that she was so far prevailed against: the true woman, who was "clothed with the sun, and had the moon under her feet, and was crowned with a crown of twelve stars," was to fly away, and give place; and a false woman to start up in her stead; who, with the golden cup of her fornications, was to deceive and bewitch all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, which was the full time the church was to remain in the wilderness: but after that time the false church, with antichrist her husband (who all this while sat in the temple), was to be revealed, judged, and destroyed, and the true church return again out of the wilderness into her own place.

Quest. Why would God suffer his church thus to be prevailed against, thus to be banished and driven out of the building which his Spirit had reared for her, into a wilderness; and a mystery of deceit and falsehood to be set up in her name and stead?

Answ. First, As a just judgment upon the world (who slighted the day of their visitation, and would not come into the vineyard to work), God brings the night upon them, wherein they could not enter into the vineyard, nor work if they would ever so fain. John ix. 4.

Secondly, As a just judgment upon such, who, though

they could not but own and acknowledge the truth, yet did not love it in their hearts, but loved their unrighteousness, their darkness still; therefore God removes the power of his truth from their eyes into the wilderness; and lets out a power of darkness and deceit upon them, wherewith they were deluded, instead of the truth itself. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

Thirdly, That such as were approved might be made manifest in the Spirit to be pure gold indeed. They that held the living truth, and could not be drawn aside, with all the pleasures of this world on the one hand, nor with all the dangers from it on the other hand; no, nor yet with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness; these did shine indeed in the light and power of the Spirit, and were a great honor and crown upon the head of their Master.

Fourthly, That darkness might have its day, or hour, or season of manifestation to the full. There hath been no day of any dispensation hitherto, but it hath had a night coming after it. There was an antichrist to be revealed in the power of darkness, as well as Christ (the eternal light of life) in the living power. Now as long as the true church stood, and as long as the man-child was found dwelling here with her, in the habitation which God had built up for them, the man of sin could not be revealed, but the pure power of life would soon discover him. Therefore at length, when the full time and season of his discovery came, God removed that into the wilderness which stood in the way; and then he and his spouse, the false church, made a fair show in the world. 2 Thess. ii. 7.

Fifthly, That the Lord might make the name of his Son, with the glory of his truth and power, to shine, by overcoming the dragon and this false church, after so long a time of thick darkness, and after such a universal prevalency of the powers and deceits thereof. Was it not a great glory and honor to the Lord, to overcome the heathenish world, and Jewish church and worship, by the power of his truth shining through a poor despicable company of fishermen and mechanics? And will it not be as great (if not a greater) glory to him to overcome the antichristian

world (after it hath taken so long and so deep root, and is become so strongly founded) by as poor, contemptible instruments as they were?

Quest. But how was it possible that so great a deceit should get up in the world so near the apostles' days, or rather in the very days of the apostles, as this seemeth to be?

Answ. The false apostles and ministers came "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, and with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. And the power of miracles in the true apostles might well cease; for the end of miracles was but to testify to the world, to be a sign to the unbelievers. 1 Cor. xiv. 22. But now their work towards the world was well nigh finished, and judgment was to come upon them for neglecting and despising the day of their visitation. So that the power of deceit was let up in the false apostles, and the power of truth did draw inwards in the true apostles, which made it very easy for deceit to prevail. Besides, the false apostles appeared in a higher appearance than the true apostles did, with more glorious discoveries; so that they could hold forth all that the apostles did (as to the form and outward doctrine), and more too, and could show wonders to confirm what they held forth further. And now how could they choose but prevail over all that kept not close to the anointing, which distinguisheth and discerneth not by any outward manifestation or appearance, but by the savor of the ointment? Yea, so great was the power of deceit in them, that they drew the third part of the stars of heaven from their place, into this earthly building; so that they fell from the true ministry, and the true church, into this false church and ministry. Rev. xii. 4. How many then of the inferior and common sort were then drawn aside!

Quest. Hath there been no visible true church-state in the world since that time?

Answ. It is impossible for any to build a true church for God, but his own Spirit. And if God removed the church which he built, into the wilderness, it is impossible for all the men of the earth to build up another true one, all that

season that God appoints his church to abide in the wilderness. Several sorts of men may attempt it, and each may build up their different images of the thing; but none can recover the thing itself, till the Lord by his Spirit (who first built, and then pulled down) pity the dust of Zion, and raise up the tabernacle of David again. Psa. cii. 13. Isa. ii. 2. Rev. xxi. 2, 3.

Quest. What is the wilderness? Tell us; that the simple-hearted, who long after the truth, may know where to look for, and how to find the true church.

Answ. It is not an outward place, into which the bodies of persons might flee; but a parable to express somewhat inward by. And it is under the feet of all the false worshippers, who are worshipping in their several buildings in the outward court. That which they trample upon, keep down, and despise, is the holy city. Rev. xi. 2. And the place where the true church all this while hath been (and yet in a great part is) is there.

Quest. But if God's church hath not been in a built state, but hath lain desolate in the wilderness ever since antichrist and the false church got up, what hath the estate of his people been ever since?

Answ. A state of witnesses. Rev. xi. 3. In every age God hath had two witnesses (which was a sufficient number to confirm his truth by), to witness to the power of his truth, against the emptiness and corruptions of the forms which antichrist had brought in, instead of the living power; which witnesses were clothed with sackcloth, giving forth their testimony with tears; while they of the antichristian party were rejoicing in the glory, riches, and beauty of their false church, as they could slay, suppress, and keep down the witnesses. Rev. xi. 10. and chap. xviii. 7, 9.

Quest. What did the dragon do after this victory, after he had got his building up in the outward court (for after he had prevailed to corrupt it, the Lord gave it to his worshippers, the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 2. those that made a profession of his truth, but were not true Jews, Rev. iii. 9. not of the

inward circumcision, Phil. iii. 3.), and had got the holy city under the feet of his worshippers?

Answ. He pursued his victory against the woman, and the remnant of her seed. As for the woman, he cast a flood of infamy, of reproach after her, that she might never be able to lift up her head again in the power of truth; but what she caused to spring up might still be reviled for falsehood and heresy; and that nothing might henceforth go for truth, but what this false woman should determine to be so: and as touching the remnant of her seed which still remained true to God, keeping his commandments, and having the testimony of Jesus, he applies himself now to wage the war against them. Rev. xii. 15, 17.

Quest. How doth he wage the war against them?

Answ. He raiseth up a beast out of this sea of confusion and wickedness (which ensued upon this great battle and victory on his side), to whom he gave "his power, his seat, and great authority." Rev. xiii. 2. He had hitherto kept his seat in his synagogue, where he had been slaying the faithful martyrs of Jesus, Rev. ii. 13. and had put to death such as loved not their lives unto death. Rev. xii. 11. Now he finds it more for his advantage to raise up this beast, and to give his power, seat, and authority to him. This was the Roman power; which, till it was thus depraved and enslaved by Satan, was not a beast, but more noble and just in government than the corrupted Jews were; but now it becomes a beast: and this beast he stirs up against the very name and form of godliness, that he might root out the very appearance of Israel from off the earth: for he got but into the form, to eat out the power; and now, seeing the power is removed, it is for his advantage also to corrupt and destroy the memorial of the true form.

Quest. Doth he effect this, and prevail likewise against the witnesses?

Answ. Yea; as he effected the other. He overcomes the witnesses after the manner that he had overcome the church (to wit, by captivating the outward man, and killing with the sword; but they overcome him by patience and faith,

in their testimony and sufferings. Rev. xiii. 10.); and this in all kindreds, tongues, and nations; and so all the public worship of the earth is given to him. ver. 7, 8.

Quest. Why would God suffer him to do thus, seeing he hath all power in his hands, and could have restrained him if he had pleased?

Answ. This was greatly needful to the present estate of his people; for by this God raised up that which was good and pure in any, and kept life in it; which otherwise might have perished in the estate of that corrupt form, which then had prevailed, and had gotten dominion outwardly over the true power.

Quest. But did not this tend to destroy Satan's kingdom also? For this stroke going against the very name of Christianity, and profession of godliness, might light upon his carnal gospellers likewise.

Answ. They could easily save themselves, turning about to avoid sufferings, and crying, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Rev. xiii. 4. Being already one with him in spirit and principle, they would not easily differ from him, and suffer about a form; especially seeing their master's interest and service ran now another way.

Quest. What became of this beast?

Answ. The Lord did rend and tear him outwardly by his plagues, famines, pestilences, wars, &c., insomuch as one of his heads was wounded as it were to death; and inwardly, by the innocency and power of his truth appearing in his witnesses, which scorched and tormented the adversary; so that this engine of the dragon grew faint and weary, and unfit for this service, as he stood in this capacity.

Quest. What doth the dragon do then, to carry on his war against the witnesses?

Answ. After this tempestuous sea was over, he raiseth up another beast out of the earth, with another kind of power, even with "horns like a lamb," Rev. xiii. 11. but "he spake as a dragon," exercising all the power of the first beast, ver. 12. so that he is the main in power henceforward; yet he

setteth up the first beast also, causing "the earth, and them that dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." And thus these two join together, to set up an image to be worshipped; and all that will not worship this image, (but the living God alone, in his pure life and Spirit) this latter beast hath power to cause to be killed, ver. 15. and such must not so much as buy or sell, who will not receive the "mark of the beast, or his name, or" at least "the number of his name;" to which number the highest growth and perfection in religion and worship, after the wisdom of the flesh, (or man's wisdom) is to be reckoned. ver. 17, 18.

Observe now diligently the place of the true church, and her estate, and the estate of her children, all the forty-two months. Her place of habitation is a wilderness; her estate, an estate of widowhood; a city unbuilt, trodden under the feet of the Gentiles; her seed, witnesses, reproached, persecuted, and slain, by the false woman and her seed. Observe likewise the place and estate of the false church and her children; she rears up a glorious building as to the outward; she is a city built and richly adorned; she hath a golden cup of doctrine and discipline, of ordinances and worship, to hold forth to the kings and inhabiters of the earth; in all nations, peoples, kindreds, and tongues; she is arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. Rev. xvii. 4. and all her daughters (who though they may deny her, yet partake of her spirit, and learn to rear up buildings of churches like her) they also flourish in their degree and measure. None is poor but Zion; none is desolate but God's Jerusalem, but his church, which fled into the wilderness, to abide there all the time of his appointment; and her witnesses are clothed with sackcloth, testifying to God's despised and reproached truth, with mourning and grief of spirit; and not with that fleshly joy, wisdom, and confidence, wherewith Babylon and her merchants vent their wares; but only in the evidence, demonstration, and assurance of the Spirit in

their hearts, which all the wise and confident builders and inhabitants of Babylon trample upon and despise.

Now it behoveth all to consider what this Babylon, what this woman is, spoken of, Rev. xvii. which came in the place of the other woman spoken of, Rev. xii. what this built city is, which the wrath of the Lord will make desolate; what this beast or false prophet is, which appears like a lamb (and showeth such miracles to deceive the earth), and yet is fierce and cruel to such as witness for God. Rev. xiii. 13, 14, 15. For dreadful are the plagues, woes, vials of wrath, thunders, &c., which God hath prepared for her; even the cup of the Lord's indignation without mixture; torment with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. Rev. xiv. 10, 11. and chap. xviii. 8. And who would not fear thee, O thou King of saints! when thou comest with thy cup of fury and indignation, to empty into the bowels of this woman, which hath been so long drunk with the blood of thy saints and martyrs. Rev. xvii. 6. Consider these things, O ye Papists! Wait on the Lord in his fear and dread; that he may vouchsafe to make known to you what, and where, this city Babylon is; and that such of you as belong to him may hear his voice calling you out of her, that ye may escape this bitter cup. Rev. xviii. 4.

The great judgment is already begun. (This we know, who have tasted of it.) It hath begun at God's house, and is spreading further; yea, even over the nations which have disowned you, and yet have learned of you to build up a church and worship after the manner of your whoredoms. These the Lord will judge first; he will plead with the daughters who have disowned their mother, and yet have gone on in her spirit of whoredoms, worshipping the works of their own hands, and administering and magnifying the beauty of the churches which themselves have formed. Now is your time to consider; now is the time for the simple-hearted among you to flee from Babylon, before the wrath of the Lord besiege her. There are three things in general (besides many particulars) which the Protestant na-

tions and churches have learned of you, which will cost them dear, ere they be made willing to part with them.

First, Their taking upon them authority over men's consciences, commanding them what they should believe; which the apostles never did, but said expressly, they had not dominion over the faith of others, but were helpers of their joy. 2 Cor. i. 24. They could not command any to believe their doctrine; but spake in the demonstration of the Spirit, waiting till God opened the heart, 2 Cor. iv. 2. and would not have men profess, believe, or practise from their words, but by a feeling of the power. 1 Cor. ii. 5. And when men did believe some things, and came into the unity and fellowship of the faith, they did not require them to believe all that the church taught or held forth as true, but waited till God pleased to reveal further. Phil. iii. 15. Indeed they could command obedience to the faith: what truths the Spirit of the Lord revealed and taught any man, they could charge him in the name of the Lord to be faithful to. Rom. i. 5. But they knew it was God alone who could ingraft the truth into the heart and conscience, and also give the increase of it; and so from him alone they expected it; waiting in patience on the stubborn and perverse, till God should please to work upon them, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. and likewise on those that were convinced, and had subjected themselves to the faith, for his increase of it. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

2dly. Their abridging men's liberty in things wherein God hath left them free, and pressing them to a uniformity in things which they themselves confess to be indifferent. Now the apostle (who had the care of all the churches, 2 Cor. xi. 28.), though he knew certainly how to determine about meats and days, as himself confesseth, Rom. xiv. 14. yet he telleth the church at Rome expressly, that Christ was the Lord and Master of every disciple, to whom he must stand or fall herein, ver. 4. and that every man ought to do as he is fully persuaded in his own mind. ver. 5. Nay he is so far from pressing a necessity of uniformity in such cases, that he presseth a necessity of bearing on each hand. ver. 3. So that, in the apostle's judgment, the church hath

not power to lay commands on the conscience, but must receive the weakest in the faith, ver. 1. leaving him to the liberty of his conscience, and to his subjection to his own Lord and Master; to whom every believer must give an account of what he receives, and of what he obeys and performs. ver. 10.—12.

3dly. Their setting up a church-building, government, and discipline, by the magistrate's power. This the apostles no where taught nor practised. They converted men by the power of the Spirit: they cut down errors, heresies, seducers, and heretics, by the same word; and they found the weapons of their warfare sufficient, 2 Cor. x. 4. they had no need of running to the magistrate. But that church, those doctrines, that government and discipline, which is set up by the magistrate's sword without and against the Spirit, that hath need of a carnal sword to defend it against the Spirit, and to cut down God's witnesses (whom he raiseth up to testify against it) for schismatics and heretics, or its nakedness will soon be made manifest, and its ruin approach.

Now when the Lord hath judged all the daughters of Babylon for these things, then will he at length begin to plead with their mother, Babylon the Great, who hath gone a whoring from the Spirit, and built up a gaudy church without the Spirit, which she hath defended by violence and blood, drinking the blood of the saints, who have been inspired by the Spirit to testify against her, Rev. xi. 7, 8. and hath taught all her daughters to do the same; to wit, to drink the blood of the witnesses against them, even as she hath drunk the blood of the witnesses that have testified against her. And though, because she hath had a half-day more given her, after her time seemed to be even expiring, and after judgment and desolation were beginning to enter upon her; though, because of this, she thinks the bitterness of death is past, and she shall now sit as a queen, a lady, a glorious church for ever, Rev. xviii. 7. yet for all this is she come again into God's remembrance, Rev. xvi. 19. and she shall see widowhood, and be cast into a bed of torment,

and all her children into great tribulation with her; and she shall be desolate, and naked, and drink of the cup, and not repent that she might escape it. Rev. xvi. 11. ix. 20, 21. This is her portion, from the hand of the Lord. Oh! happy is he whose eyes the Lord shall open, to flee out of her for life! For the Lamb is arisen to make war, and his spouse is making herself ready for his pure bed of life, and his anger is kindled against all the kings and powers of the earth that stand in his way; and though they fight ever so resolutely against him and his meek ones, they shall not prevail, but the Lamb will overcome all; for he is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and they that are with him in this battle of his Spirit, are "Called, and Chosen, and Faithful." Rev. xvii. 4. And though this woman (the false church, in her various dresses) is so strong, every where getting the earthly powers and authorities on her side, that now it may be said concerning this beast, in the several appearances of it, as was concerning the former; "Who is able to make war with her?" yet there is an invisible power stronger than she, who will call her to judgment, Rev. xviii. 8. and make her give an account of all the saints' blood which she hath drunk herself, and which she hath taught her daughters to drink. And "salvation, glory, honor, and power," shall be ascribed to the Lord, for his righteous and powerful judging of her. Rev. xix. 1, 2. And he that hath any glimmering of this in the eternal light of the Lord's pure, ever-living Spirit, let him even now say, "Hallelujah" to him who is "arisen out of his holy habitation," and hath already begun this work, who will not fail to perfect it. Amen.

Somewhat Concerning the Ground of Error, and the Way to Truth and Unity; for the Sake of such as are more Spiritual.

There is no way to become an heir of the kingdom of God, but by being begotten and born of his Spirit; which blows upon the spirit of man, breathes life into him, and forms him in the eternal image. John iii. 8. Gal. iv. 19.

There is no way of having this work of God preserved, but by turning to the Spirit which begets, standing and keeping upright in that which is begotten, and taking heed of the fleshly wisdom, which stands near to corrupt and destroy the work of God; tempting and leading aside from the truth itself, into some image and resemblance of it. And if this prevail, there is suddenly a departing from the living God, and a running a whoring after the inventions of the fleshly wisdom, which appears in the likness of the true wisdom, that it might the better deceive.

Now when man is first breathed upon, and begotten towards God, there is but a little life, a little simplicity, a little light, a little power, a little of the wisdom of the true babe; but a great body of death, deceit, darkness, power, and the wisdom of the flesh, standing; and all these apply themselves to overturn and destroy the true work of God, by raising up a false image of it, which is easily done; but abiding and preservation in the truth is difficult, and alone maintained by that power which at first begat.

Now the power preserves through keeping out of the sensual and reasoning part(where the corrupt one hath his lodging), in that poor, low, little, childish sensibility of the life, which the Father hath begotten. Here is the entrance into the truth; here is the growth, here is the preservation and safety; which makes it so hard for those that are wise and strong in the reasoning and comprehending part, either to

enter in, or to abide and grow in the nakedness, simplicity, and seeming folly of the truth of the gospel. Oh, what a deal is to be brought down, before they can be truly reached and convinced by the foolish and weak things which God chooseth to effect his great works by! 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. What a work hath God with them to batter their wisdom, and bring down their understanding; which the larger it is, the more it stands in the way of his light. 2 Cor. i. 19. And if they be convinced at any time, what an easy and natural return unto them doth their own wisdom find, by some subtle device or other, to draw them back from the plainness and singleness of the truth, into a holding it in the wisdom and subtlety of the understanding part, where the simplicity is soon lost. 2 Cor. xi. 3.

In the Spirit which begets, and in the truth which is begotten by it, is the true unity. Feeling that in one another, is that which unites us to one another. Every one keeping to that in his own particular, is kept to that which unites; and that is kept alive in him which is to be united; but departing from that, there is a departing from the true unity into the error and ground of division. And then that which hath erred and departed from the true unity, strives to set up a false image of unity, and blames that which abides in the truth, because it cannot thus unite; for that which abides in the Spirit, and in that which the Spirit hath begotten and formed, cannot unite according to the flesh; as that which is run a whoring from the Spirit, into an image of the fleshly wisdom's forming, cannot unite according to the Spirit. Consider this, O ye professors of this age! Ye blame us for departing from you; for withdrawing from unity with you. We blame you for departing from the living principle, wherein our unity with you formerly stood, and wherein alone we can again unite with you; and not in such things as uphold a fleshly and false image of the true unity.

Oh, that ye could hear the Lord's voice, who crieth aloud to the professors of this age to cease from man! Cease from man in thyself, O thou who hast ever had any taste of the pure grace and power of God! Cease from thine own

understanding, thine own affections, thine own zeal, thine own gathered knowledge and wisdom from the Scriptures, with all the sparks of thine own kindling; that God may be all in thee, and his eternal habitation be raised up in thee, and perfected, and thou swallowed up and comprehended in it for ever. Oh, what a work hath God to drive man's reason and wisdom out of his temple, out of his Scriptures, out of all his holy things! He that hath an ear, let him hear, for the sake of his soul's eternal peace. Alas! alas! how many stumble at, and blaspheme that, which alone can save the soul! There have been many dispensations of, but there is but one living truth; but one substance; but one arm of salvation. And he that stumbles at the thing itself, how can he be saved by it? It is easy misunderstanding a former dispensation, reading it in the letter; and so to miss of the salvation hoped for by it.

The Jews owned the Messiah (according to the Scriptures, as they thought), but rejected him in the way he came to save them in. Now if Christians have gathered such a kind of knowledge from the letter of the Scriptures as they did, how can they avoid the same error; namely, of owning Christ according to the Scriptures, as they think, but rejecting him as he comes to save them; rebelling against his living ministry, and the pure power and demonstration of his Spirit, because it appears weak and low; because it doth not appear the same thing to them which they expect to be saved by, according to their apprehensions of the Scriptures? Thus reading the Scriptures in another spirit and wisdom than that which wrote them, they must needs conclude and gather another thing from them than what is written in them; and so make that a means to them of erring from the life, which was written to testify of, and point to, the living principle from whence life and salvation springs, and where alone it is to be had.

THE

NEW COVENANT OF THE GOSPEL

DISTINGUISHED FROM

THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW,

AND THE

REST OR SABBATH OF BELIEVERS, FROM THE REST OR SABBATH OF THE JEWS; WHICH DIFFER AS MUCH FROM EACH OTHER, AS THE SIGN AND SHADOW DOTH FROM THE THING SIGNIFIED AND SHADOWED OUT.

IN ANSWER TO

SOME QUERIES OF W. SALTER'S, TENDING TO ENFORCE UPON CHRISTIANS THE OBSERVATION OF THE JEWISH SABBATH, WHICH WAS GIVEN UNDER THE LAW TO THE JEWS FOR A SIGN.

AS ALSO TO

Some other QUERIES sent in writing, upon occasion of an EPISTLE directed to all such as observe the Seventh Day of the week for a Sabbath, now under the GOSPEL. As likewise some LETTERS to the same purpose.

WITH A BRIEF EXPLICATION OF THE MYSTERY OF THE

SIX DAYS' LABOR, AND SEVENTH DAY'S SABBATH.

Whereto are added

Some CONSIDERATIONS propounded to the JEWS, tending towards their Conversion to that which is the Life and Spirit of the Law.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

We which have believed do enter into Rest. Heb. iv. 3.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or sabbaths; which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is Christ. Col. ii. 16, 17.

PREFACE.

THE apostle Paul saith, that God had made them "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6. After the dispensation of the law, which was a shadow of good things to come; and after the dispensation of the prophets, who foretold of better days, and of a better state to come, than the days and state under the law were; it first pleased God to send the fore-runner John the Baptist, in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way for the King and his kingdom; and then to send the King himself, in the fulness of his spirit, to gather disciples to him, and to furnish them with a competent measure of the same Spirit, to raise up a spiritual seed to him, in whom he would set up his kingdom, dwelling, walking, and reigning there; causing his light to shine from thence round about the earth, as from his holy city, founded upon his holy hill of Zion.

Now those disciples or ministers whom he chose to raise up this holy seed unto him, he made fit and able to minister his new covenant, by which it was to be raised; yea, he furnished them with such a power of his Spirit, that they were able through him to minister, not in the letter, as the old covenant was ministered (which left the people still dead; nay, because of the transgressing nature, made the offence abound, and so increased death upon them), but in the quickening Spirit, which raiseth from death, and bringeth into the light of the living, to walk with the living God towards the land of eternal rest and peace. So that that which they ministered was Spirit, and that which they ministered to was spiritual. By the power of the Spirit, in preaching the living Word of faith, they reached through the veil to that which lay in death; they stirred up a living

principle, and ministered life to it through the Spirit. Gal. iii. 5. And such as were born of this living principle, they taught to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to be made perfect by the Spirit, and not to run back to the ministration of the letter (as was proper for the Jews in their day) after the manner of the former dispensation, but to keep in the living principle, to grow up in the seed, into the eternal life and immortality of the gospel.

Mark well (O ye christians, who desire eternal life), the different way of ministration between the law and the gospel! The law was a ministration of the letter, in which they were to wait for assistance from the Spirit, by which they might be kept in the faith of, and made obedient to, the law. Neh. ix. 20. The gospel is a ministration of the Spirit, wherein they are to begin with the Spirit, and to go on with the Spirit; not to gather outward rules out of the letter, from what is written or spoken, but to keep to the living principle, and feel refreshment to that, in reading or hearing what is written or spoken by the Spirit. And thus the Scriptures being read, or any one speaking from God being heard, it is mingled with faith, and becomes profitable, feeding and refreshing the young, tender plant, the living principle, and causing it to grow up into God: whereas whatever is understood, or received, or held out of this, feeds but the earthly, and doth but thicken the veil over the living seed; to which the kingdom belongs, and to which the gospel is sent to be preached, to raise it, that it might live and thrive, and grow up into its stature, that so it might inherit.

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand," said John the Baptist. Mat. iii. 2. "It is come unto you," said Christ, Mat. xii. 18. that power of life which was made manifest in him, was it; "and this kingdom is also within you," saith Christ to the Pharisees. Luke xvii. 21. The Pharisees demanded of him when the kingdom of God should come. It cometh not, saith he, with outward show or observation; it cometh not that way you look for it; to wit, by the manifestation of an outward glorious king, to reign outwardly in the com-

monwealth of the outward Israel; but the kingdom is within you. How was it within them? Christ explains to them in another place; it was in them like a grain of mustard seed; it was the least of all the seeds in their hearts. There were many great seeds of darkness there, but yet there was also one little seed of light. It was there as well as the rest (though less than them all), and did sometimes cast some glimmerings of light, and of its shining in the darkness, though the darkness could not comprehend it. This seed was also likened to leaven, which being received by faith into the lump, would leaven the whole lump, and bring it into the savor and dominion of the kingdom. Now the ministry of the apostles was to turn men from Satan's kingdom to this kingdom; from his large compass of dominion in the heart, to this narrow seed; from his great territories of darkness, to this little principle of light; from his great power of death, to this little, weak thing of God; wherein the eternal power and godhead is made manifest, as this comes to be opened and increased by the Spirit. Here light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart; where it is to grow up, and from whence it is to be reaped after its growth to perfection.

Oh, how long have Christians (so called) wanted the Spirit! How have they wearied themselves, in running to and fro about the letter, to find out the mind of God, and are still unsatisfied concerning it, and even drowned in fleshly imaginations and contentions about it! They seek to have that satisfied which is not to be satisfied: they seek to have that know which is not to know: they offer to God the service, faith, and obedience of that which he will not accept; and keep that from him which he calls for. They seek for the Spirit in the letter, according to the manner of the law; but wait not to feel it in the seed, quickening the seed, raising up the seed, and dwelling in the seed, whither Christ and his apostles directed to wait for it. They look for that knowledge, that faith, that life, that Spirit, from words written, which the apostle preached was to be waited for from the Word in the heart. And by this means they

raise up several buildings, and get various kinds of knowledge, each according to his understanding and apprehensions of the letter, every sort being very confident concerning their own apprehensions that they are the right; and thus they wander from the city of the living God, and from the living knowledge; building up images, some outwardly, some in their minds; some more gross, some more refined; but all, more or less, who are not acquainted with the living knowledge and truths of God, but have gathered apprehensions with the wrong tool from the letter, have set up somewhat else instead of the true life and power (the knowledge of the true God, which is life eternal), the knowledge of the true Christ (whom no man can indeed call Lord, but by the Spirit), the knowledge of the everlasting gospel (which alone is read in the Spirit), the knowledge of the Spirit (which alone is read in the seed). These are strange things to the several generations of the Christians of this age, who commonly know no more of them, than according to the apprehensions they have taken in concerning them; even from that wisdom and understanding which hath not a capacity in it to receive them, but must be destroyed before these things can be understood aright. 1 Cor. i. 19. Oh that ye could read in the eternal light of life! O Christians, Christians! Oh that ye could see how your understandings and knowledge from the letter stand as much in your way, as ever the Jews' did in theirs; and must be broken down as flat as ever theirs was, before the foundation of the kingdom can be laid, and the building of eternal life reared up in your hearts! Be not offended at my zeal for the Lord my God, and for your souls. It hath cost me very dear, what I testify to you in the simplicity and integrity of my heart; and this I know to be most certainly true, that that spirit of man, which, without the leadings of the eternal light, hath nestled itself in the letter, got a seat of wisdom and knowledge there, raised up a building from thence, either of inward or outward worship, will be dissettled and driven thence, even by that very Spirit which gave forth the letter. And when this is done, and God's Spirit again

openeth the letter, oh, how sweet, how profitable, how clear, how refreshing will it be, being read in the light of the Spirit, and in the faith which is in Christ Jesus, which is begotten in the heart by the word of faith, which is nigh there. From that light, from that spring (as the Lord pleaseth to open, enlarge, and fill the vessel), all the words of the holy men of God came; and in that alone they have their sweetness, freshness, virtue, and fulness; but how to read the words outwardly written, keeping to that, and understanding them in that (and how to keep out the natural man, with his natural understanding, which knoweth not the things of the Spirit, nor can know or receive them, 1 Cor. ii. 14.), is a mystery to them who have not been turned inward to this word, nor have known or heard his voice. The Lord is recovering the mystery of life; and as that appears, the mystery of death, under all its paint (under all its painted faith, painted love, painted knowledge, painted obedience, painted duties, ordinances, and worship), will be made manifest. Happy is he whose inward building will stand, whose gold will abide the fire and everlasting burnings of the jealous God, whose eye-salve was bought of the true Spirit, whose raiment is right spun; but exceeding hard will it go with that man whom the Lord (when he cometh to search him) shall not find a right inward Jew, as he took himself to be, nor truly circumcised by the Lord's eternal Spirit with the light thereof, but only by such a circumcising-knife as he himself had formed out of the letter of the Scriptures. This is the great misery of Christians; the veil lies over their hearts, even the same veil which covered the letter of Moses from the Jews: and they are groping after the mind of God in the letter; but the life is hid from them, even as it was from the Jews: and because they also say they see, and that they have the life and the Spirit, therefore the veil remains, and the caul of iniquity surrounds them, so that they cannot see into that which makes free from it, but remain yet in captivity and bondage to the enemy.

THE

NEW COVENANT OF THE GOSPEL

DISTINGUISHED FROM THE

OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW.

SOME QUERIES OF W. SALTER'S, TENDING TO ENFORCE UPON CHRISTIANS THE OBSERVATION OF THE JEWISH SABBATH, ANSWERED.

Query 1. WHETHER the fourth commandment, expressed Exod. xx. be not moral and perpetual, as well as the other nine be, yea or no?

Ans. That covenant which God made with the Jews at Mount Horeb, when they came out of the land of Egypt, was not to be perpetual; but to make way for that covenant, priesthood, lawgiver, and law, which were to be perpetual. That law, so given forth, made nothing perfect; but was a continual handwriting of ordinances against the Jews; and the very salvation of the Jews was by another covenant, and by the laws thereof, Deut. xxx. 11. by which covenant, and by which law, they might be made perfect, and come to the better hope. Which other covenant is the covenant of grace, or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, or the Word which is nigh in the mouth, and in the heart, and speaks life to them that can hear and believe the joyful sound of it.

Now that this former covenant was not to abide, but to give place to the other, see Heb. viii. which treateth of the new covenant: for God's speaking of a new covenant importeth that he himself hath made the first old. ver. 13. It had a long continuance among that people of the Jews; but

now against the coming of Christ, who was to be Mediator of a better covenant, ver. 6. even a new covenant, ver. 8. as it had been long decaying, and waxing old, so now it was ready to vanish away, as ver. 13.

And indeed it was necessary it should pass away; for it was not faultless. How, not faultless! Was there any sin in the holy law and ministration of God by Moses? Can there any just blame be found in any thing that proceeded from the Lord? Nay, surely the ministration of Moses was holy, and without blame; but it was weak, through the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. and therefore God would lay that aside, so far as it was weak, and suited to the weakness of a fleshly people, and bring, instead thereof, a ministration of the law in the Spirit, which should be lively and powerful and effectual in the spirits of his people.

That which God aimed at in a covenant, was to keep him and his people together. Now this covenant was weak on the people's part; they continued not in it, and so, according to that covenant, God disregarded them. ver. 9. Now God finding this covenant not able to effect his purpose of love towards his people, he finds fault with it, bringing forth another, or second, which this gives place to. ver. 7. And this other covenant, or new covenant, is not according to that. How not according to that? Why thus: it was not written outwardly, as that was. "Not according to that which I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." ver. 9. "For I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts." ver. 10. And here they shall learn the knowledge of God, every one from the least to the greatest. ver. 11. "So that all the children of this covenant shall be taught of the Lord," and learn the law from his mouth; not as it was given at Mount Sinai, (which ministration was to the children of the old covenant) but as it goes forth out of Zion, and from the "Jerusalem which is above," which is the mother of all the children of the covenant, and nourisheth them, not with the law of Moses, but with the milk of her own breasts.

Now if any think to restrain this to the types and shadows of the law, they therein err: for the main covenant was the law of commandments, which they still broke, worshipping other gods, making images and likenesses, taking his name in vain, profaning his sabbaths, and so of the rest. It is true, the first covenant had a worldly sanctuary, a tabernacle wherein was the candlestick, &c., but the chief matter of the covenant was the ten words; therefore the tables wherein it was written were called the tables of the covenant, or the tables wherein the covenant was contained. Heb. ix. 4. Yea, the ten words are expressly called the covenant itself. Deut. iv. 13. Observe therefore diligently these few things following in the fear of the Lord:

First, The ten commandments given by Moses from Mount Horeb were the covenant which God made with the Jews when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.

Secondly, That covenant God found fault with, because it was not able (through the weakness of the flesh on their parts) to keep them to God.

Thirdly, Against Christ's coming God provideth a new covenant, a better covenant for him to be Mediator of; which covenant was not outward, like the former, but inward, put in the mind, writ in the heart. As the people was inward, the sanctuary inward, the ark inward, the tables of the covenant inward, so the covenant itself, and the writing of it, were inward also. And this covenant, as it is only written in the Spirit, and is that which is spiritual, so it cannot be read in the letter.

Fourthly, That wherever this new covenant cometh, the other waxeth old, whether to a person or people. Wherever the law of the Spirit of life is made manifest, the law of the letter is swallowed up in it, and is known no more but as it is comprehended, and is brought forth in it. And he that is in the Spirit, and hath received the law of life from the Spirit, knoweth not Christ after the flesh; how much less Moses. But taking the whole ministration of Moses in the spirit, not only the ten commandments, but

all the sacrifices and other types also, here they are owned and received, even in Christ the substance: but the ten commandments, so far as they were a shadow, pass away before the Sun of righteousness, as well as the other types and shadows of the law.

Objection. But was there any thing of the ten words a shadow? Do they not all command abiding things?

Ans. Moses' whole ministration (as it stood in the letter without) was but a shadow of the fulness and perfection of that ministry of the Spirit which was to come, and to be set up by the Son in his house. Heb. iii. 5, 6. Moses' people, but a shadow of the spiritual people; Moses' priests and sacrifices, but a shadow of the spiritual priests and sacrifices; Moses' law in the letter ministered from Mount Sinai, but a shadow of Christ's law in the Spirit to be ministered from Mount Zion. 2 Cor. iii. 10, 11. The law itself which was given by him, but a shadow of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. John i. 17. Of whose fulness every believer receives a portion of the same grace, "even grace for grace;" ver. 16. which grace is to be his teacher, both of what he should deny and turn from, and how he should live and carry himself both towards God and man. Tit. ii. 11, 12. Look particularly on the commandments, and see if there will not appear something of a shadow in them.

The first commandment to that people, "That they should have none other gods (like the heathen) but him only whose powerful arm had brought them out of Egypt." This is a shadow of the subjection of the spiritual Israel singly in Spirit to the Lord of spirits, who by his mighty arm redeemed them out of spiritual Egypt. Now must they bow to other lords no more, Isai. xxvi. 18. as they did bow in the land of Egypt (Oh, who can read this!), but bow alone at the name of Jesus, and be subject to the arm of his power in their spirits alone for ever.

The second commandment, "That they should not make any images or likenesses of things in heaven or earth, or bow down to them, is a shadow of what God requires of spiritual Israel in the inward, where all likenesses, inventions,

imitations, resemblances of what they have seen in the Spirit above, or beneath in the earthly nature, they must not make themselves, nor bow to such as any others make.

And they must not "take the name (of the Lord their Redeemer) in vain," pretending to the living power when it manifests not itself in tehm; pretending to meet inthe living name, and to worship in the Spirit, when they are gone a whoring from it, and become strangers to it. What should I mention any more? It is easy to observe how the other commandments were shadows of the inward innocency and purity which the believer receives inwardly into his heart from the powerful operation of the law of the Spirit of life in him.

Object. But may any of these laws be broken? If they may not be broken, then they are perpetual.

Ans. The reason why they may not be broken is not because that the dispensation of them is still in force, but because the dispensation of the law of the Spirit comprehends all the righteousness of Moses' law: and the end of Christ's dissolving that covenant was not that any might have liberty to do any thing which is there manifested to be unrighteous; but that the righteousness of it might be fulfilled in them who receive his law in the Spirit, which never could be fulfilled by receiving of Moses' law in the letter. Rom. viii. 4. And mark this diligently, ye that have been exercised in the Spirit towards God: the law of sin is nearer to us than any law of the letter can come; the covenant of death and hell (with the laws thereof) is written within by the finger of Satan; and that which blots them out must be as near, even an inward covenant, an inward writing from the eternal Word in the heart, by the law of his eternal Spirit of life.

This then is my answer: Moses' law in substance remains, as it is taken in by Christ, and administered by him in Spirit; but not as it was given in the letter to the Jews: for so it was a shadow, making nothing perfect: but making way for the better hope, for the covenant established upon better promises, for the inward law of the Spirit of

life in Christ Jesus: which effects that in the spirits of his people, which Moses' law could by no means do.

Quest. But what is the substance of the law which abides?

Ans. The substance of the law is *love:* to love God above all (above all without, above all within), and to love one's neighbor as one's self. To receive this love from God, and to bring it forth in his Spirit, this is the substance of the law; this is the thing which the law drove at in a shadow. The law is fulfilled in this one word *love;* but that love must be received from God which fulfils the law. A man may strive to love abundantly, and strive to obey in love, and yet fall short of the covenant; but the Lord must circumcise the heart before that love can spring up which fulfils the law. Deut. xxx. 6.

Objection. But doth not the Apostle Paul say, that by the law is the knowledge of sin; and that he had not known lust, except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet;" plainly referring to the tenth commandment, which saith, "Thou shalt not covet."

Ans. By the law outwardly was the knowledge of sin outwardly to the people of the Jews; by the law inwardly is the knowledge of sin inwardly to the spirits of disciples. Now a little consider and wait on the Lord, to know what administration of the law it was that Paul knew sin by; whether it was by Moses' administration of the law in the letter, or by Christ's ministration of his law to him in the Spirit. It is rendered in our last translation, "Thou shalt not covet;" but it might more properly be rendered, "Thou shalt not lust:" for if *ἐπιθυμία* be properly rendered *lust*, then *οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις* may as properly be rendered, "Thou shalt not lust." And he that hath received the administration of the law in the Spirit, knoweth it thus to issue forth from the Word of life into his spirit. It discovers the lusts and affections of the flesh, which draw from the yoke and subjection to the Spirit; and then, by a command from the living Spirit, it hedgeth up the way after the other lovers, saying, "Thou shalt not lust." And as the law of the flesh ariseth, kindling desires after vanity, and after fleshly

ease and delight; so the law of the Spirit arises in the inner man, forbidding, pricking, stopping, and limiting that which would be at liberty out of the life and purity of the holy law. And here begin the bitter fights and terrible battles and conflicts between the two seeds, wherein all the powers of heaven, earth, and hell are engaged.

Now because this interpretation of Paul's words may seem strange and uncouth to persons who have drunk in another apprehension, and have taken it for granted that Paul there refers to the tenth commandment, consider the place yet further, and perhaps the Lord may please to open it to you from the very letter, even as he hath opened it to others immediately by his Spirit, by causing them to feel the thing which Paul felt, and to receive the law as he received it.

Paul (in that seventh of the Romans) speaks of three states which he had known.

First, A state of life before the law: "I was alive without the law once." ver. 9.

Secondly, A state of death after the commandment came: then sin revived, and he died. When the word of life came with its living commandment to set upon sin indeed, then sin would dally no longer; it would no longer lie as dead, and let Paul live in his zeal and worship as he had done before; but it slew him, it showed its power in him, sometimes deceiving him, and sometimes forcing him from that which was holy, spiritual, just, and good, and to that which was unholy; insomuch as he did do what he hated, and could not do what he loved; and found himself a wretched man, and in miserable captivity, because of the body of death, and the law of sin in his members. ver. 23, 24.

Thirdly, A state of life, after the commandment had done its work in thoroughly slaying of him; when that was removed which the law came against, then he was married to another husband, then he could bring forth fruit unto God; Rom. vii. 4. then he could walk freely with God, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, chap. viii. 4. and rejoice in the life and the peace, instead of roaring out because

of the death, which came from the carnal mind. ver. 5.

Now when was the time when Paul "was alive without the law"? Was it not when he was righteous, when he was whole? Then he had no need of the physician, then he had not received the wound, even the terrible wound which Christ then gives the soul when he calleth to it by his Spirit, and giveth forth the commandment, "Thou shalt not lust." When he had "confidence in the flesh," being circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Phil. iii. 4, 5, 6. Here was a living man; and his exact receiving the ministration of the law in the letter was part of his life; yea, but he had not received the commandment yet that slew him. Paul was alive yet, and could flourish in the freshness of his life, zeal, and abundant knowledge under this administration of the law: but when God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness, shined in his heart; when God began the work of the new creation in him by his living light; when the commandment came fresh from the Spirit (the commandment which was ordained to life, Rom. vii. 10. which the ministration of the law in the letter was not, no not to the Jews, but another. Deut. xxx. 14, 15.), then Paul began to feel the sting of death, and the power of sin, which now rose up in its strength to retain one of its subjects, and to keep the stronger man than he from dispossessing him, if he could. And now how was poor Paul rent and torn, and harrassed by the enemy, and made to see and feel his miserable captivity, until he had passed through the death, and was redeemed from under sin, and consequently from under this bitter ministration of the Spirit, by his holy, pure, and severe law against sin! For the man being dead, the law hath no force against the seed, nor against that which is one with and lives in the seed: and this it is he speaks to the Romans concerning, who also were acquainted with the ministration of the law, as ver. 1. of the 7th chap. Now is it not very manifest that Paul

knew not sin spiritually by the ministration of the law in the letter, but was alive without it, until he felt the ministry of it from Christ in the Spirit? And that soon struck at his life, and by degrees slew it, killing the body of sin in him, with its members, and so preparing him for the marriage to another husband.

Object. But by this then a man is not only freed from the law of the letter, but also from the law of the Spirit: for if this law be ministered to him till death pass upon him, and till he be married to Christ, then after death is passed upon him, and he is baptized into death, and risen with Christ, and married to him, the law passeth away likewise.

Ans. There is a double ministration of the law of the Spirit; a sharp ministration against sin, and a sweet ministration in the renewed Spirit. The ministration against sin passeth away, as the sin is wrought out; but then the sweet, spiritual current and law of its holy and pure life in the renewed Spirit is more vigorous and full. So that the law of the Spirit remaineth for ever; but its convictions, its reproofs, its chastisements towards the worldly part, diminish and pass away as the worldly part is wasted; and its sweet, comforting presence, pure peace, fresh joy and life, increase as the new man grows and flourishes.

Query 2. Whether the scope and drift of that fourth precept be not to persuade us to lay by the works of our calling one day in seven, that we may on that day wholly give up ourselves to wait on the Lord, in the performance of duties of piety and mercy, for our attaining of, and growing in, sanctification and holiness?

Ans. The scope and drift of the fourth commandment was to enjoin the Jews to keep the sabbath strictly as a sign, by forbearing all works, and sanctifying it as a day of rest to the Lord according to the law. Ezek. xx. 12. But the substance being come (Christ, who is the body, Col. ii. 17.), the day and rest of the Spirit being known, the sign is at an end, and the thing signified taketh place. So that the rest is now in Christ, through the faith, by his Spirit, where the worship is. And this in the gospel comprehends the

time of worship, the place of worship, and the worship itself (which are spiritual), where, in substance, all is known, enjoyed, and solemnized, which was figured out in shadows under the law. The sanctification being come, the rest being come, the Lord of the sabbath being come, shall not the sign of the sanctification, the sign of the rest (which rest the Lord of the sabbath was to give, and lead the spirits of his people into), pass away? Exod. xxxi. 13.

Query 3. Whether the fourth precept do not as strictly bind us to keep holy the seventh day of or from the creation, as it bindeth us to the observation of a seventh day?

Ans. The fourth commandment did not require the observation of a seventh day in general; but of a seventh day in particular, of those of whom it required it: for what the law required, it required of those who were under the law, and not of others. Rom. iii. 19.

Query 4. If the seventh day's sabbath be not moral and perpetual, then how comes it to pass that it was instituted or appointed from the first creation, when men by guilt stood in no need of a Saviour, nor yet of such a ceremony; Gen. ii. 3.

Ans. That it was instituted or appointed from the first creation, or that God intended to require of man the observation of it had he abode in innocency, is not manifest in the Scriptures; but that God did then bless and sanctify it. (in relation to the service he had for it), that is expressed in scripture. Gen. ii. 2, 3. And that this was one end for which he did sanctify it, namely, that it might be for a sign unto that people of the Jews (which were the people he chose to set up his signs and figures of the invisible things among), the scripture also testifies. Exod. xx. 11. but what further meaning there is in it, and what relation it hath to all the redeemed of the Lord, in whom God brings about the new creation, with the rest thereof (as he did the old), it is better to wait to know and feel in the Spirit, than to be prying into with the curious, searching, fleshly understanding.

Query 5. If the seventh day's sabbath be not moral, and

belonging both to Jews and Gentiles, then how comes it to pass that it was given to all men in Adam, when there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles and was observed by command from the beginning, as appears by comparing together Gen. ii. 3. and Exod. xvi. 18, to 31.

Ans. That it was given to Adam in innocency, or to all men in Adam, I do not find, nor do these places quoted make it manifest; but its being practised before the giving of the law doth not prove its perpetuity, or that it was not given for a sign: for circumcision was instituted and observed long before the giving of the law, Gen. xvii. and sacrificing long before that, Gen. iv. both which were signs of the inward, and not perpetual as to the outward observation of them.

Query 6. If when our Lord Jesus saith, (Mat. v. 18.) that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle should in no wise pass from the law;" if he there meant not the law of the ten commandments, expressed in Exodus xx., then what law did he mean?

Ans. By the law is meant the whole ministration of Moses; as by the prophets (ver. 17.), the whole ministration of the prophets: and that it is not to be restrained to the ten commandments, is manifest by the instances which Christ gives, more of which relate to other parts of the law than to the commandments: for there are but two instances out of the ten commandments; but there are four instances out of other parts of the law, as may be seen, ver. 31. 33. 38. and 43. of that chapter. So that Christ doth not only take in the ten commandments, but he takes in the rest of Moses' ministry in the Spirit, not one jot or tittle whereof is to pass till it be all fulfilled; but was to stand in the letter to the Jews till full season, and then in the Spirit till all be finished there also.

"The law and the prophets were until John;" from that time the kingdom of God began to be preached, Luke xvi. 16. and both the law, prophets, and John himself were to decrease, and Christ and his kingdom to increase. Christ, in this fifth of Matthew, had been preaching the kingdom,

declaring to whom it appertained, and the blessedness of such. Now this his manner of preaching might seem to derogate from the law of Moses, and from the prophets, whose doctrine and dispensation hereby he might seem to destroy: but Christ taketh away the occasion of such a misapprehension, bidding them not think he came to destroy the law, or the prophets: for he was not come for that end, but to fulfil. Wherein he doth these two things:

First, He establisheth that ministration of the law and prophets for its season, till it should be fulfilled by him the substance, who was to fulfil all the righteousness of it. It should last out its whole day, and should not fail in the least tittle of it (as he himself explaineth it, Luke xvi. 17.); till the heaven and earth of the Jews passed away. Heb. xii. 27, 28.

Secondly, He taketh in the substance of it into his own ministration, and layeth it more inwardly, and closely, and largely upon the spirits of his disciples than Moses had done in the letter upon his disciples; but he doth not give it out in full, but only giveth a taste to his disciples how straitly he would minister it to them by his Spirit as they came under his yoke, Mat. xi. 29, which yoke is the Spirit of the law thereof, as Moses' yoke was the law of the letter.

Now mark yet further: Christ does not give out the letter for his law, as it was delivered by Moses; but requireth somewhat of his disciples which comprehends the letter. As now when he administers the law against revenge, from whence murder proceeds, he doth not say, "Thou shalt not kill," as Moses had said to them of old time; but saith, Thou shalt not be angry without a cause, nor give thy brother any provoking language. ver. 22. Nor does he say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" but, Thou shalt not let out a lustful look, nor let in a lustful thought. ver. 28.

And had he spoken here about the sabbath, would he have administered it in the letter, or would he have commanded the observation of the true sabbath, where no work is done, no fire kindled (nor so much as any sticks gathered to make a fire with), nor no burden borne; but the man-ser-

vant, the maid-servant, the ox, the ass, and every creature rests in the seed? "The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath." It is true he subjected himself under the law; but yet he was still Lord; and he maketh all his, kings and priests to God! who being once baptized into his death, know also his resurrection and reign.

Object. But all the other commandments are to be kept according to the letter; for although it should prove so, that believers are not bound to observe them by virtue of Moses' ministration in the letter, but by virtue of the ministration of the Spirit, yet the commandments themselves are kept; but take away the outward observation of the sabbath, and this commandment hath no fulfilling at all according to the letter.

Ans. This ariseth from the different nature of the thing: for the other commandments require or forbid that which is either good or evil in its own nature; but this is but good or evil by institution or command. To keep a day, or not to keep a day, is not good or evil in itself, but as it is commanded, or forbidden, or left at liberty in the Lord, and according as it is done or forborne by him who received the command or prohibition, or is let into the liberty of the gospel. Rom. xiv. 6. So that if the nature of the thing required in this commandment, had been alike with the nature of the things required or forbidden in the other commandments, it would have been as durable after the dissolution of that covenant, as the other things therein contained were; which vanish not in themselves upon the dissolution of that covenant, but only pass into a higher way of dispensation, where they retain their full virtue and strength, even according to the letter, though not by virtue of the administration of the letter; another higher and fuller administration of a better covenant challenging and taking its own place.

Query 7. If the seventh day's sabbath be not moral, but an abrogated ceremony, now since the death of Christ; then wherefore should our Saviour instruct his beloved apostles, that they must instruct the Christian churches to pray, Mat.

xxiv. 20. that they might not flee on the sabbath, knowing that their flight would fall out more than thirty years after his death?

Ans. Great was the hardship the Jews underwent in the siege of Jerusalem, by that apprehension of theirs that they ought not to do any work (not so much as of defending themselves) on the sabbath; which hardship such disciples of Christ among the Jews, as could not easily be drawn off from the law and Jewish observations, but still were for circumcision, and keeping of an outward sabbath, might be liable to. Now Christ, and the apostles after him, were not hasty to withdraw them from such things, but for a time bore with them therein; insomuch that Paul circumcised Timothy, and became to the Jews as a Jew; and to them that were under the law, as under the law himself also. But the strength of the query seems to lie in this, *That it should bear the name of sabbath from Christ's own mouth, in relation to somewhat which should happen on it more than thirty years after it should cease to be sabbath.* To which my answer is plain, that that may as well bear the name of sabbath, as Jerusalem, or the temple, bear the name of the holy place, ver. 15. of the same chap. For Jerusalem and the temple did as much cease to be the holy place above thirty years after those words were spoken, as the Jewish sabbath could cease to be the sabbath.

Now for the sakes of such as have been truly exercised in their spirits by the Spirit of the Lord (and have felt the powerful work of his grace, and a building raised up by him), and may yet be further exercised, I shall add this. Jerusalem was a type of an inward building in the spirits of God's people; both in its rearing up, in its situation, in its standing, in God's dealing with it all the time of its standing; and lastly, in its downfall and utter desolation. There is an appearance and building of God in the spirits of his people, which is to give way to, and be swallowed up in, a fuller and higher appearance. But the fleshly spirit, getting into this building, will not give way to the further and more inward and spiritual appearance of the Spirit, but will have

the first building stand as the building, and will entertain no further appearance of God, than as it can comprehend it, subject it, and afford it a place in the first building. Hereupon God distresseth Ariel, even the city which David built (saying within his heart; surely "that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land, so he causeth the overflowing scourge to pass, even over thy whole land, O Emanuel"). Now when the enemy enters within the holy city, and within the holy temple, it is time to flee, and exceeding great distress will befall that disciple, whose flight is either in the winter or on the sabbath day. Do not imagine at this; but if the Lord open it not at present, wait his season; for the thing is true and sealed, both by the openings of the light eternal, and by sensible exercises and experiences from that light.

Thus I have answered such of the queries as concern the seventh day's sabbath. Such as seem to argue the unwarrantableness of observing the first day of the week for a sabbath, I leave to those to whom they are tendered (and of whom an answer seems so conscientiously and zealously desired, as I do not see how it can be reasonably neglected or denied), that by weighty evidence of Scripture he may be reduced, if he hath erred; but if not, but it be truth which he hath therein held forth, the Lord may be honored in men's bowing and subjecting to every truth of his, by what instruments soever it pleaseth him to make it manifest.

AN

EPISTLE

TO

ALL SUCH AS OBSERVE THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK, FOR THE SABBATH OF THE LORD.

FRIENDS,

In true love to your souls, and in the fear of the Lord, I have a few things to lay before you, that the simplicity in you may not be deceived, and ye err from the way of life, while ye may be eagerly seeking and pressing towards it: for notwithstanding that, if with the wrong eye ye be searching into Scripture, ye must needs mis-read, mis-understand, and mis-practise; and so thereby will still be running further and further from God, even while ye think ye are drawing nigher towards him. Be persuaded, therefore, seriously to consider (out of the wisdom from which God hides, in the babish simplicity of his begetting, where the true life springs) these few things following.

1. That the whole law of Moses (the ten words, as well as the institutions about sacrifices and worship) was added because of transgression. Gal. iii. 19.

2 That the whole law (the ten words, as well as the sacrifices) was representations, figures, or shadows, of somewhat relating to Christ, the seed; subservient to the promise, not making perfect, but pointing to, and making way for, the bringing in of the better hope. Gal. iii. 21. Heb. vii. 19. The law of the commandments, or the ten words, did no more make perfect, than the other shadows or sacrifices did, but with them made way for the better hope, towards which they were to lead their scholar, or disciple, as school-master,

8. That the whole dispensation of the law was given to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles. Rom. ix. 4. And so not any thing there written bindeth the Gentiles (as there written), but only the Jews. God had another way of making his mind known to the Gentiles. Rom. i. 19. —ii. 15. According to which he would judge them. ver. 12. And not by the law written, which was given to the Jews, which spake not to the Gentiles, but to the Jews, who were under it. Rom. iii. 19.

4. That the duration of this dispensation of Moses' law in the letter, was till Christ, the seed, should come and fulfil it. Gal. iii. 19. and 24, 25. Moses' family, with all the laws thereof, were to prepare for Christ, the seed, and to give way to him when he came; for when that dispensation, which was figured out, is come; then that dispensation which did figure it out, is at an end. Heb. 8. 5, 6. Christ came to do the will, to keep and fulfil the whole law, and so to put an end to that dispensation of it. Psa. xl. Rom. x. 4. And so he taketh away the first administration of the law, which was in the letter, that he might establish the second, which is in the Spirit. Heb. x. 9. 2 Cor. iii .7—11.

This then is the truth, as it is in Jesus, concerning this thing; That Christ coming in the flesh, and fulfilling all the righteousness (as well of the ten commandments as of the sacrifices) puts an end to that dispensation wholly; so that henceforth both Jews and Gentiles are to come to him, to hear his voice; "This is my beloved Son, hear him." And Moses fotetold, that when that prophet came, he was to be heard in all things; whose whole ministration was but to figure out what the Son was afterwards to fulfil in Spirit, Heb. iii. 5. who would be faithful to give forth the entire law and substance of life to his house or family of believers, as Moses was faithful to give the entire shadow to his house or family, of that nation of the Jews. ver. 6. So that here, in the gospel, Christ being come, the new covenant and law in the Spirit takes place, and not the old covenant or law in the letter. And this law is more inward, more full, more close, more spiritual, and more lasting, than the

ministration of Moses' law to them of old time was. Gal. iii. 25, &c. And it is the ministration of this law of the Spirit, which is not to pass away from the disciples of Christ, until all be fulfilled; but is to remain a sword against every lust and desire of the flesh in them, until they all, with the very root of them, be thereby cut down. Mat. iii. 12. Heb. iv. 12. Mat. v. 17, 18.

Quest. But what were the ten commandments a figure or shadow of?

Ans. The tables of stone were a representation or figure of the fleshly tables of the heart, wherein the new law of the covenant of life is written.

The writing of the law of commandments in the tables of stone was a figure of the writing of the new law by the finger of God's Spirit in the heart. The outward writing in the outward tables was a figure of the inward writing in the inward tables.

The law itself of commandments, which was written in those tables, was a figure of the law of life which is to be written in these tables.

And this law thus received, thus written, is easily fulfilled; whereas, the law in the letter, because of the weakness of the flesh, was very hard to be fulfilled, and generally proved a hand-writing of ordinances against the Jews: for he that was guilty of one, was guilty of all, and so upon every transgression had the force and strength of the whole law against him. And whosoever now runs back to the law in the letter, to take up any command as held forth in it, and so making himself a debtor thereto, will be found a breaker thereof in spirit, even one that hath more gods than the Lord, a maker of images, or likenesses of things in heaven, or things in earth, if not of both; a taker of the name in vain, a profaner of the sabbath, &c. For he that hath not received the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, knoweth not the Lord of life to be the only true God, but maketh images in his mind, and taketh his name in vain, not feeling the living power thereof; nor can keep his sabbath (ceasing from sin, forbearing his own works, his own willing

and running, and entering into the rest of the gospel): for there is but one day of rest holy to the Lord; all the sabbaths of the law were but signs of it, having but a significative or representative holiness; but the day of redemption which the Lord hath made, Psa. cxviii. 24. (in which his redeemed rejoice, and rest to him) that hath the true holiness. This was it which came by Christ, the other came by Moses. John i. 17. Moses' family or children were to keep that day (that was the day for the servants, who were to be exercised under the shadows), but the believers are to keep this day in the Spirit, to enter into this rest by the faith, Heb. iv. and to worship the Father in it, in the Spirit and in the truth, on the mountain of his holiness, John iv. 23. whereof the other mountain, temple, worship, and day were but a shadow.

Now the sum or substance of this law of the Spirit may outwardly be signified in divers short words; as love, that comprehends the whole of it: so doth fear; there is the whole wisdom and course of the life comprehended also; or thus, "Thou shalt not lust," (thus it was administered to Paul, Rom. vii.) or thou shalt "keep the sabbath," or "believe in the light, follow the light." The observing of any one of these in the Spirit, is the keeping of the law; for every breach of the law is out of the love, out of the fear; a lust of the fleshly spirit, a transgression of the sabbath, or spiritual rest to God; out of the light, and out of the faith. But if ye will read this in the Spirit, and come to the true righteousness of the faith, which is received in the obedience of faith to the law of the Spirit, ye must come to the word of faith; to which Paul directs, Rom. x. 6. by the hearing whereof is the justification, and not by a bare believing that Christ's blood was shed; for it is the virtue of the blood which saves; which virtue is in the living word, and is felt and received in hearing, believing, and obeying that word, thereby bringing into unity and conformity with him, both in his death, and in his resurrection and life. This is the only way to life; be not deceived; there is not, nor ever was, any other. Oh, wait on the Lord in his fear!

that it may be opened to you, and that slain in you which cannot bear the straitness thereof, and with which there is no erring.

From a friend to your eternal peace,

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

SOME QUERIES,

SENT IN WRITING, (UPON OCCASION OF AN EPISTLE DIRECTED TO ALL SUCH AS OBSERVE THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK FOR A SABBATH)

ANSWERED.

Query 1. IF the whole law of Moses, the law of the ten commandments, as well as the law of sacrifices, were both added upon one and the same account for transgressions; then why doth the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures lay forth such an antiphitical use of them (I suppose he means antitypical), the one that sin might abound, Rom. v. 20. the other sacrificing for sin? Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9.

Ans. That the law of Moses was added because of transgression, is manifest from that scripture quoted by me in my epistle, as well as from other scriptures; and one end why it was added in relation to transgression, was, that the offence might abound, which would make the sacrifice of propitiation for sin appear more necessary and more acceptable. And the sacrifices also relate to the sinner, some referring to the sin committed, others to the thankfulness and acknowledgment due for the peace, mercy, and blessings of God towards his poor, sinful, erring creatures; both which were to last till the time of reformation from the sin. Heb. ix. 10. Gal. iii. 19. (But that they were both added *upon*

one and the same account, that I did not affirm; that is wrongfully put upon me.)

Now though both these were added because of transgression, yet they had not both the same use and service in relation to transgression, but the one was added to discover sin, and to make it appear exceeding sinful, Rom. v. 20. the other to blot it out, to take it away, to make atonement for it; which the sacrifices did, making the sinner upright and perfect as relating to that outward state and capacity, though they could not as pertaining to the conscience. Heb. ix. 9.

Query 2. If the whole law, the ten commandments, as well as the sacrifices, were representations, figures, or shadows of somewhat relating to Christ, the seed; then what did they in general, or either of them in particular, represent, figure, or shadow forth, before they were written in tables of stone, or since they were written in tables of stone, more of Christ then than now?

Ans. That the ten words were some of the precepts of Moses, and appertaining to the first testament or covenant, all which precepts were sprinkled with blood, cannot be denied. And the apostle distinguisheth the precepts of Moses under the law, which were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices under the law, Heb. vii. 19. from the precepts of Christ which he writes in other tables, chap. x. 16. which also are sprinkled with blood, but not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood; and he that receives any of these precepts out of the blood of Christ, cannot truly and spiritually obey them, though he may strive much to form his spirit into the obedience thereof. Now the time and season of their signification was the time which God allotted them under the law, wherein was the use of signs; but the gospel is a state of substance, of bringing the life and immortality into the heart, and into the possession of believers, which the state of the law shadowed. So that they are not signs since the gospel, since Christ put an end to the law-signs, shadows, and figures, nor yet before the law to believers, so far as they were in the new covenant;

(for as the thing signified cometh, so that which signifieth it passeth away) though that was a mixed state, wherein God gave a taste of both covenants, before his perfect dispensing or bringing forth of either.

Query 3. If the whole dispensation of the law was given to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles, and so the Gentiles not bound to that law, but another way for them to know the mind of God; then whether that law cited, Rom. ii. 15. which the Gentiles showed the work of in their hearts, be another law contrary to that law that was given to the Jews, even the ten commandments?

Ans. The law which is the substance, is not contrary to the law which is the shadow, but is the comprehending and fulfilling of it. The law in the Spirit (written by God's power and presence in the heart and mind) is not contrary to the law in the letter, but is a higher and more glorious ministration of it. The one commandment which God gave by Moses to the Jews, Deut. xxx. 11. which was the commandment of life and death, as relating to their inward and eternal state, ver. 15. was not contrary to the ten commandments, which God had commanded them before by another covenant, which he had made with them as an outward people, and which was to be their rule as to their outward state; for they were chosen by God to be a holy people outwardly, and so an outward rule of holiness and obedience was prescribed them; but by all their obedience thereto, they could not be justified, but only by hearing, believing, and obeying Christ, the word nigh in the heart, and by feeling in the spirit the blood of that one offering.

Query 4. If the Gentiles were not bound under that law that the Jews were, which carried the curse with it; then which way have the Gentiles redemption by Jesus Christ? seeing all that are redeemed, are redeemed from the law, and the curse thereof. Gal. iv. 5.—iii. 13.

Ans. As they were under the curse outwardly, by transgressing that outward law or covenant, and so missed of the outward happiness of the holy land, and still met with wrath and judgments, and at last utter cutting off, as to their out-

ward state, and as to all their hope from that covenant; so he that comes to receive the ministration of the law of the Spirit, will find the curse as abundantly inwardly, even till that be cut down by the sword of the Spirit, which the curse is to; and that brought into dominion, to which is the promise and blessing. So that the Gentiles find as great need to be redeemed from the curse inwardly, which the inward law brings upon the transgressor, as the Jews did outwardly; yea, and find a more heavy burthen and load than ever the Jews did outwardly. Paul, when he was alive in the outward administration of the law, not being acquainted with the inward, he knew little of the curse; he was according to it blameless, Phil. iii. 6. but when he came to receive the living light of the spiritual administration of it into his spirit, then he felt the burthen, and weight and misery of sin, and the curse indeed; and cried out, "O wretched man, who shall deliver?"

Query 5. If the duration of the dispensation of Moses' law in the letter was till Christ, the seed, should come and fulfil it, and the dispensation of Moses' law (so stated without distinction) between that that was perpetual, and that that was ceremonially vanishing, and so in the fulfilling of it besides; then what law or commandments that or they were, which, while Moses' dispensation was in full force, is said to be perpetually sure, to stand fast for ever and for ever, as Psa. x. xi. 7, 8. and when Christ, the seed, was come, and had fulfilled all that the Father had appointed him to do, was established, Rom. iii. 31. and not one jot or tittle of it to pass so long as heaven and earth remain? Mat. v. 18. and Luke xvi. 17.

Ans. That distinction between something in Moses' law being perpetual, and something ceremonial, is not sound and proper in this place; for all that was under Moses' law was but a shadow, as in that dispensation; and that testament was dedicated with blood (with the blood which was a shadow) which related to every precept, Heb. ix. 18, 19. and it was all substantial and perpetual in what it signified and related to. The sacrifices were substantial in that sacri-

fice which they signified, as well as the law and precepts were substantial in the law and precepts which they signified. And as the first covenant pointed at a second covenant, so the laws of the first covenant pointed at the law of the second covenant, the ministration whereof is from the Mediator of that covenant, and they come into the heart sprinkled with his blood. Now the law or commandment, which, even under that dispensation, was to be perpetual and last for ever, was "the word in the heart," and the laws thereof, Deut. xxx. 14. which Moses by especial order from God, and according to the tenor of another covenant, directed the Jews to. ver. 4. For the law, as administered by Moses, in the letter, is not perpetual or eternal; but as it comes from the Spirit, and is administered in the Spirit, so it is spiritual and eternal. That administration was fitted to that people; and, we know, the Lord, if he had pleased, could have given a fuller administration of his law in the letter than that was, as Christ plainly intimates divers times. Mat. v. But if it had been ever so full, yet the administration of it in the letter is to give place to the administration of it in the Spirit; so that the administration of it in the letter is not perpetual, but for the time which God allotted it; but the administration of it in the Spirit is eternal and perpetual, and there it remains an eternal light, witness, and sword against sin and the transgressor. And thus it is established in the hands of the Spirit, after the season of that ministration of it in the letter was ended; and thus not one jot or tittle of it was to pass away, after the other ministration, with every jot and tittle of it, was ended.

Query 6. If the coming of Christ in the flesh; and his fulfilling all the righteousness of the law; and being foretold by Moses to be that prophet that was to be heard in all things (which is not denied by us); but if by these he put an end to the law of the ten commandments, and gave forth another law to his house or family; then what law that is, and whether it be contrary to that law that he with the Father gave forth, as Deut. xxxiii. 2. with Psa. lxxx. 17.

which now is in gospel ministration holy, just, good, as Rom. vii. 12. and spiritual. ver. 14.

Ans. It is the law of the Spirit, or the light of the Spirit in the heart, which discovers sin (not only in the outward acts, but in its principle, rise, first motions, and inward nature), giving forth his living commands against it. This is the law now, in which the believer is to begin, Gal. iii. 3. and according to which he is to go on to perfection. For as the believer is begotten of the Spirit, and born of the Spirit, so he is to receive the ministration of his law from the Spirit, and in the Spirit. He receives a gift of faith, a measure of faith from the eternal spring of life, and that is his law. His law is *the law of faith*. The light of life, which he receives in the faith, opens the mind and will of Christ to him in the Spirit, showing him both sin, and also the things of God more fully than the law of Moses could, though opened by the Spirit; for it is a fuller, a deeper kind of ministration, and so opens the things which it ministers more fully than a ministration of an inferior nature can. Yet it is not contrary to Moses' law, but comprehends all the substance, all the righteousness and equity of it (as I said before), which it as a shadow represented, and commanded to that outward or shadowy people, the Jews. But the law which Paul spake of, Rom. vii. was the law of the Spirit, or such a ministration of the law as Paul knew not, all the while he was under the ministration of Moses' law blameless; but this law found out sufficient blame in him. ver. 14. &c.

Query 7. If Jesus Christ, as he is the Son, gave forth another law to his house or family; and that law contrary to that that the Father gave forth; then whether there are not two lawgivers, when the Scriptures say there is but one. James iv. 12.

Ans. The substance, when it is shadowed out, or when it is nakedly dispensed, is one and the same thing; so that whenever it comes, it cannot be another thing than what the shadow represented it to be. Moses' dispensation and Christ's are one in Spirit; and when he cometh in Spirit, he doth not destroy either Moses or the prophets, but com-

prehends them; so that the law is but one, although the dispensations of it have been various; but the proper dispensation of the law now to Christians is Christ's dispensation, not Moses' dispensation; and Christians are now to look for light and knowledge of it in the tables where Christ writes it, according to his covenant. So that there have not been two laws given out, but the one law of God hath been variously dispensed; in and according to the letter by Moses to the Jews; in and according to the Spirit by Christ to his disciples.

Query 8. If the tables of stone, the writing of the law of the ten commandments in the tables, and the law of the ten commandments itself which was written, were figures or representations; then whether the finger of God's Spirit doth write the law of God two ways, in the inward table (so called); namely, in the heart of Christ's family; in one way, whilst Moses' dispensation was on foot. Psa. xxxvii. 31. For the Psalmist speaks in the present tense (which was under that dispensation): now is it another way in this latter dispensation expressed? 2 Cor. iii. 3.

Query 9. If two ways, then how doth the finger of God's Spirit write them these ways?

Ans. The eternal covenant was the same under the law as under the gospel; and its tables were the heart then, as well as now; and its way of writing the same then as now, even by the finger of God's power or eternal Spirit: and thither the Jews were even then referred for the inward writing of the law. Deut. xxx. 14. So that they who truly hearkened even to Moses, were to wait on this word, which was nigh in the heart, for the writing of his laws there. And they that hearkened to this law, which endureth for ever, knew the writing thereof in their hearts: whereas the Jews, who were very diligent to get the law into their hearts from the letter, could never thereby attain the writing of it there; but were still found breakers of it, and under that curse which belonged to the breach. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David and the prophets, knew the inward Jew, who becomes so by the inward covenant, and by the

inward dispensation of the law in that covenant; and the law which was after the promise could not disannul the promise which was before it: but it stood good and firm to the children, even to all the spiritual seed, the whole time of that outward dispensation of the law.

Query 10. If not, then how doth the writing of the law in tables of stone represent the writing of the law in the tables of the heart; seeing the tables of the heart were wrote upon by the finger of God's Spirit, whilst the tables of stone were in full force, and the dispensation had not ceased?

Ans. Though the tables of stone, or law thereof, were in force to that outward people of God, the Jews; yet this did not destroy his inward people, nor his inward tables in their hearts, nor hinder him from writing his inward law there; but the inward and eternal covenant ran underneath to them inwardly, (even all the time of their outward dispensation) whereby they were made inwardly righteous and obedient to God. And as God had particularly directed, by Moses, to the word and commandment of that covenant, so he would not fail to write it thereby in the hearts of such as turned to the word and commandment. So that this was the law which God wrote in the heart even then, and was always the inward substance, while as Moses' dispensation was but an outward sign thereof.

Query 11. If the law of the ten commandments itself, which enjoined love and duty to God, and love and duty to man, as Mat. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40. was or is a figure of another; then what law that is that is the anti-type of this law, which in succeeding of it, enjoins not love and duty to God, and not love and duty to man?

Ans. This query ariseth from a great mistake, as if the law in the letter and the law in the Spirit could not require the same thing; whereas they do require the very same thing in substance, but several ways, according to the difference of each administration; to wit, the one literally, of a literal or outward people; the other spiritually, of a spiritual or inward people; the one requires love according to the tenor of the letter, the other according to the Spirit.

Query 12. If the owning of the ten commandments, as they are plainly laid down in the letter, be a breaking of them in the Spirit, and especially those contained in the first table; then how doth the truth of God written, which is life and truth, Acts vii. 38. and Eccl. xii. 10. and the Spirit which is given forth, meet together; seeing the Spirit leads and guides into all truth?

Ans. I do not know any who have said, "that the owning of the ten commandments, as they are plainly laid down in the letter, is a breaking of them in the Spirit;" but he that hath the Spirit owneth the dispensation of the letter in its place and season: but the Spirit doth not teach them to run from his own dispensation (where it is livingly administered to such as wait on the eternal Word in his covenant of life for it), to that dispensation which was appointed for, and given forth to, others. But that the truth, as it is written (outwardly), is life, I do not read; but otherwise, 2 Cor. iii. 6. where Paul saith, *the letter killeth* (speaking of the letter of the New Testament). The Spirit indeed guides into all truth; but it is the living soul whom he so guides, and it is the living truth into which he guides in the new covenant; though it was he also who gave forth, required, and was able to lead into, the letter of the old covenant.

Query 13. Whether, when Jehovah gave forth the ten commandments plainly as a law in the letter, he did intend, by the observation according to the letter, the breach of them by the Spirit?

Ans. The Spirit doth not teach to break the commands in the letter; but such as are under the ministration of the letter, to observe them according to the letter: and such as are under the ministration of the Spirit, to fulfil the righteousness of them in the Spirit. Yet the Son of man is "Lord of the sabbath;" and if he bid a man "take up his bed and walk," which was bearing a burden and doing of work on the sabbath-day, it is no breach of the sabbath. Now this is most righteous; that as the Son's rest should be entered into under the gospel, so the day of rest should be kept by his disciples and family.

Query 14. Whether to say, the keeping the law of God according to the letter is a breaking of it in the Spirit, be not a charging of God, that gave it forth to be kept, and the Holy Spirit that incites us so to do now in this administration, James ii. 8. and says they do well that do so; and yet thou sayest they break it in Spirit: but tell us by any one scripture, how a man, assisted by the Spirit to own Jehovah alone to be his God according to the letter of the first commandment, doth break the command in the Spirit? Or so the like of any other of them.

Ans. This query is altogether from a mistake; for it was not said by me, that "the keeping the law of God according to the letter is a breaking of it in the Spirit;" but that he that "runs back to the law in the letter, to take up any command as held forth in it, will be found a breaker thereof in Spirit." And for this, the Jews in general, and Paul in particular, may be my instances; who was exceeding strict according to the letter of the law, but yet was a grievous breaker of it in Spirit; and did not love his neighbor as himself, but, in a blind zeal, was a bitter persecutor: and if the Jews had taken that direction of Moses, Deut. xxx. 14. the observation of the law in the letter might have been more easy to them. So that the turning towards, and receiving the Word in the heart, from whence the letter came, is the only way to fulfil the letter; and the law is not so much as to be known, much less fulfilled, by running to the letter of it in the first place. And this I certainly know, that there is no coming to the Lord of life, nor no keeping chaste to him, but in the new covenant, and in the light of the Lord, as it is there dispensed: and till then, the mind cannot forbear making of images and false representations of him to itself; though being from the light of this covenant, it cannot discern that it doth so, no more than Paul, by the letter of the law, could discern that he was a breaker thereof in his violent persecutions.

Query 15. Whether the prophets, Jesus Christ, or the apostles, by their keeping the law according to the letter (that they did so is evident), did break the law in the Spirit?

Ans. The prophets were under the law as to their outward state; though inwardly not without feeling the virtue of the new covenant. Christ also was made under the law, and took upon him the fulfilling of that dispensation of Moses, that he might bring the believing Jews from under it into the liberty of the Spirit; that they might receive the adoption of sons, and the free ministration which was appointed for the sons, and might not be held under that ministration of bondage which was appointed for the servants. And the apostle bids believers to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, not making themselves debtors to the law. Gal. v. 1. For they were children of the promise, children of New Jerusalem, the free woman, children of the new covenant, and not children of Mount Sinai, the old covenant, the law in the letter. chap. iv. 15, 16.

Query 16. If there be but one day of rest holy to the Lord, and all the sabbaths of the law were but signs of it, that is said to be the day of redemption which the Lord hath made: then whether that day be a day natural, one of the seven days of the week, which either respects the day on which our Redeemer suffered, or that on which he rose again from the dead, or any other?

Ans. As the gospel is not natural, but spiritual; so its day of rest is not natural, but spiritual likewise. Yea, I may add this also, the six days' work in the new creation is not natural either.

Query 17. If not so, but that it should be intended applicable to the day or time of the gospel-administration from the time that Christ suffered in the flesh unto the end of the world: then whether this day, that is intended as a sabbath, is one with that day that the Scriptures intend and call a sabbath, which Christ himself gave his disciples charge to have respect unto in their flight. Mat. xxiv. 20.

Ans. The supposition here put, demonstrates that those that put it have no acquaintance with the gospel-sabbath; but propose another outward time for it, even the time from Christ's suffering in the flesh, to the end of the world. Now if any should so affirm, it were as justly to be excepted

against, as pressing the observation of the Jews' sabbath is. That which signifieth is outward or natural, and signifieth to that part which is without: that which is signified is inward and spiritual, and is known, entered into, kept, and enjoyed in the Spirit. It is a spiritual sabbath, not a natural, which God hath instituted for his spiritual people, after he hath led them out of spiritual Egypt, and teacheth them to worship him in Spirit and in truth.

Query 18. If they intend one and the same sabbath-day, then how impossible was it for the disciples of Christ to escape fleeing on that sabbath-day, though ever so fervent in prayer, in regard that this sabbath spoken of, began when Christ had suffered, and put an end to the dispensation of Moses' law: and the flight spoken of by Christ, which respects the Lord's sabbath, was not until many years after Christ's sufferings.

Ans. The supposed sabbath being before denied, the foundation of this query fails.

Christ's sabbath is not an outward time or day in the flesh; but a day in the Spirit; even a day of rest from all the labors of the fleshly part. But this was spoken to before, in the answer to the last of W. Salter's queries, whereto I may add this: Christ spake to his disciples of things as they were able to bear them. Now as they understood not his death, so then they understood not the abolishing of those things which were to pass away after his death; so that Christ might very well call Jerusalem the holy place, and the seventh day the sabbath, speaking to them in that state.

Query 19. If they intend not one and the same sabbath-day, then which are the disciples of Christ to have respect unto; whether that that Jesus Christ enjoined his disciple to have respect unto, or that that Isaac Penington would enjoin the disciples to have respect unto?

Ans. This query hath very little in it, save to show the unsavoriness of the spirits of them that put it, and their want of acquaintance with the ministration of the Spirit. They that know the gospel-sabbath (which is the substance of the law-sabbath) can tell who enjoined it them; and can

also tell that he hath not required of them the observation of the Jews' sabbath. But they that are born after the letter have been always subject to revile and reproach the truths of the Spirit, and those that testify thereto.

Query 20. If the Lord's holy sabbath be that day which we may suppose is intended, by this paper sent unto us, to be the day that contains the time of gospel administration; then whether that sabbath doth prohibit outward labor, as well as abstaining from sin? If not, then which way must this sabbath be kept? seeing that they that did and do observe the weekly sabbath, did and do it in the spirit, and rest by faith in Christ, worshipping the Father in Spirit and in truth.

Ans. The gospel-sabbath begins not in the observation of outward time; but as it is spiritual, so it hath a spiritual beginning, increase, and perfecting, wherein there is a rest to the spirit from sin, and from the creaturely works, and a worshipping in the Spirit; even as on the outward sabbath there was a bodily ceasing from labors, and an outward worshipping. And he that heareth the joyful sound of deliverance from sin and self-working, and entereth into the faith (beginning to cease from his own works and working, and to wait in the Spirit on the power for its working in him), hath a taste of the gospel-sabbath, and beginneth to see that day which the type pointed to, and ends in.

Query 21. If that that was ministered to Paul, Rom. vii. thou shalt keep the sabbath, or believe in the light, follow the light, and the observing of either of these in the Spirit, be a keeping the whole law; then how are the Scriptures observed, if the keeping of one commandment be a keeping the whole law, when the Holy Spirit in Scripture says, that he that offends in one point, is guilty of all? James ii. 10.

Ans. I did not say, that the keeping of one commandment is the keeping of the whole law; but that the observing in Spirit any one of those there mentioned by me, is the keeping of the law: which was not barely said, but demonstrated; because no part of the law can be broken, but every one of these must be broken. He that commits any sin

breaks the gospel-sabbath, which is a resting from all sin and self-works; errs from the law of love received in the Spirit, which shuts out all enmity and transgression both against God and man; departs from the fear, which keeps from departing from God by any iniquity; and enters into the lust, where is the womb of sin, out of the compass of which womb sin cannot be conceived, much less committed. So that Paul, in that law received from the spirit, *thou shalt not lust*, saw the whole body of sin struck at; whereas before, under the ministration of Moses in the letter (according to which he said he was blameless) there was not so much as the life of one sin struck at; but for all his exact answering of the law according to that ministration, he was alive still. To decide this controversy, let it be put to trial; let any one singly wait on the Lord for the administration of his law in the Spirit, and if the Lord give forth that command to him, "Thou shalt not lust," in the clearness of the light of his eternal Spirit, let him try, if, continuing in obedience and subjection thereto, he can commit any one sin whatsoever. I do not say, that a man's proposing to himself that he will not lust, or his striving of himself to love and fear the Lord, or his applying himself to keep the sabbath, or rest from sin, to the Lord, will do this: nay, this is but an administration in the letter, and will prove weak against the inward strength of the enemy; but receiving the law in its pure, living administration in the Spirit, and from the Spirit, here comes strength against the enemy, which is too hard for him, while it is abode in. And this the Apostle Paul taught the Galatians, who were running backward toward the law, and not forward in the Spirit: he bids them "walk in the Spirit." Gal. v. 25. And so doing, as they should not be under the law, ver. 18. so neither should they be breakers of the law: for within those bounds sin enters not, but is kept out; not so much as a lust against the law being there known, much less any open transgression against it: and against such as thus keep within the bounds of the Spirit there is no law, ver. 22, 23. but against all that make themselves debtors to the law of the letter, there

stand in force both the law of the letter, and of the Spirit also; and they cannot, in that state, be free from the condemnation and curse thereof, whatsoever they may imagine concerning themselves, and their own state, from a misunderstanding and misapplication of the Scriptures.

The first Letter answered.

There is a double ministration of the law: a ministration in the letter, and a ministration in the Spirit. The ministration of the letter was by Moses, from Mount Sinai, in tables of stone, to that outward people, the Jews: the ministration of the Spirit is by Christ, from Mount Zion, in tables of flesh, to believers, or his disciples. Now this is it which the Lord hath made manifest to me, that the disciples of Christ, or believers, are to have recourse to their administration for the receiving of the law from the Spirit, and not to run back to that ministration which was literal and outward, and fitted to a literal and outward people, This was more fully set down in my epistle in several particulars. Now in opposition to this, it is said,

First, That all, written in that epistle, makes no more at all against a gospel, spiritual observing in love the seventh day sabbath to the Lord, than they make against a gospel, spiritual observing of the other nine commandments.

Ans. My epistle striketh not at a gospel, spiritual observation of any thing; but he that will obey spiritually, must receive his command from the Spirit, in that way which the Spirit hath chosen to dispense it to him. Now the same Spirit which wrote his law in the letter under the old covenant, writeth his law in the hearts of believers under the new covenant, Heb. viii. 10. which is a better covenant, and of which covenant Christ is the mediator, ver. 6. and Christ is as faithful to give forth the laws of his Spirit in the hearts of his people, as their condition requires them, as Moses was

to give the law written in the tables of stone to his house. Heb. iii. 5, 6. And as Moses pointed his disciples to Christ coming in the flesh, so Christ pointed believers, or disciples, to the Comforter, the Spirit of truth: first to wait for him, and then to receive light or his law of life from him: and this is gospel, or new covenant, even that which the Spirit speaks or writes in the heart: and this hath power in it, and saveth; whereas the letter killeth.

Now consider seriously, whither should a believer go for these laws? To which covenant? To Moses' covenant, or to Christ's covenant?

Secondly, That all these commands, being holy and good, are to be loved, and in love to be observed, &c.

Ans. All the statutes, and judgments, and ordinances, and precepts of the Lord are holy and good, and are to be loved: but each is to be obedient to that which God requires of him, and to have recourse to that ministration of the law of God to him, under which God hath set him. He that believes, he that hath received the Spirit, is to have recourse to the law of faith, and to the Spirit, for his light or law: he who was under the law of Moses, was to have recourse to the law of Moses; for the law of Moses spake to them who were under it in his family, giving forth the precepts, or the commandments of that dispensation, to them who were under his testament. Heb. ix. 20. And Christ speaks to his family by his Spirit, whom his disciples are to hearken unto, and not to grieve him, or quench his motions, or despise his prophesyings; but give diligent heed thereto, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in their hearts.

Now to obey in love doth not make the distinction of the ministrations; for love belongeth to each ministration. The Jews, in their day, were to obey the law in love, and to have it in their hearts. Deut. vi. 5, 6. But this makes the difference, the Jews were to seek to the letter for it; the disciple is to receive it from the Spirit; for he is to begin in the Spirit, Gal. iii. 3. whereas the Jew's beginning was in the letter. And this is obedience in the newness of the Spirit, when the law is received fresh from the Spirit, who

both writes new things, and brings to remembrance old things livingly and powerfully: but to go to Moses' ministration, and learn it there, and get it into the heart from thence, that is according to the old ministration or covenant, which was given in the letter to the Jews, as may appear in that place last cited. Deut. vi. 5, 6.

Thirdly, That in the same Spirit and love that we have the Lord for our God, &c., in the same we are to remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.

Ans. The Lord teacheth believers to know him to be the only true God, &c., by the law of the covenant of life in Christ Jesus, which he ministers to their spirits in the Spirit; whereby he teacheth them so clearly and effectually, that they need not run back to the tables of Moses' covenant, from thence to teach one another to know the Lord; but they shall all know him from his teaching, from the least to the greatest: yea, and I may add this; this covenant, by its ministration, teacheth more clearly than the ministration of Moses' law in the letter could teach. Heb. viii. 10, 11. They that have been with Moses, and have learned the law of him, under the ministration of his covenant, have yet need of coming to Christ; but they that have been with Christ, and have learned the law of his Spirit, by the teachings of the new covenant in their hearts, have not need of being sent back to Moses. Moses pointeth forward to Christ; but Christ (even in the flesh) sendeth not his disciples from his own dispensation back to Moses (though he also established the dispensation of Moses for its season), but pointeth them forward to the Comforter, or to his appearance in the Spirit. And this is the mark of a Christian, which it is the intent of the letter to direct him to, and not for him to fix in the letter, as men have done since the apostasy from the Spirit.

This argument is further enforced thus, because he that said the other, said this in the same law and spirit.

Ans. It is true, he that said the other by Moses to the Jews, said this also to them, and they were strictly bound thereto; but that which binds the disciple is the ministra-

tion of the new covenant, where Christ writes this law in the minds and spirits of his people, by which they are bound, and such as are out of that, the Lord, when he cometh to examine them concerning their faith and obedience, will say to them, "Who hath required this at your hands? Were ye children of the new covenant? Did ye receive the spirit? Had ye a measure of faith given you? Were ye new creatures? Why did you not keep to your rule? Why did ye not wait on the spirit, and receive the law from the New Jerusalem, from whence it issues forth to the family of believers?" The Jews were to be taught by precepts and judgments from Moses; but "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord."

It is said yet further, "so that if thou keepest the other, and not this, thou art a transgressor of the ROYAL LAW of LIBERTY.

Ans. What is the royal law? What is the law of liberty? Was the law as it was administered by Moses the royal law? Or is it the royal law as it is administered by the Son, who is the King of saints, and writes his law in their hearts, as their King? Again, was the law, which Moses administered to the Jews, a law of liberty, or a law of bondage? Did not the ministration on Mount Sinai gender to bondage? Gal. iv. 24. But in the ministration of the law by the Spirit is life and liberty. ver. 26. and 2 Cor. iii. 17. And this very law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is royal, and a law of pure liberty, and there is no bondage in it thus administered: but let any man now read it in the letter, and strive to obey it to the utmost he can, he shall find it weak through the flesh, accusing and imbondaging him. And this is the reason that Christians so mourn in their prayers, even as persons in bonds, because they know not the royal law of liberty; because they feel not the love which the Spirit begets, but strive to get the letter into their hearts, and to answer the commands in the letter with what love and obedience they can come at; and this (through not seeing into the true covenant and ministry of Christ) they call obeying in the Spirit. The testimony of

Jesus, Rev. xii. 17. is the Spirit of prophecy, chap. xix. 10; and his commandments come fresh from that Spirit of prophecy, which are to be taken heed to till the day dawn, and the day-star arise, and then a fuller ministration is witnessed than that of prophecy, even the shining and appearing of that which was prophesied of, which every believer is to wait for in the propheeies of the Spirit, and in obedience to those commands, which come livingly into his heart from the Spirit of prophecy.

Fourthly, That the fourth command is to be in love kept by all believers.

Ans. All the commands of Christ's covenant are to be kept by believers, according as he pleases to dispense them under his administration in the new covenant: but the laws of the old covenant are not the laws of the new covenant, as so dispensed; but only as they are comprehended in the righteousness which is taught and required by the Spirit, which is fuller, stricter, and exacter than that which the law of Moses required.

Nor do I hereby go about to teach any to break the least of Christ's commands, but the way to fulfil them; which is by keeping to the certain knowledge and obedience of them, in that ministration where Christ hath promised to dispense and make them known to believers, which is under the ministry of his own covenant, writing them in their hearts and minds by his Spirit. And here the keeping of all Christ's commands is possible; yea, this is the only way to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us; for he that keeps the eye which the Spirit hath opened in him close to the Spirit, shall not be able to break any law of righteousness, but the righteousness even of Moses' law shall be fulfilled in him.

Christ is the rest of the gospel (as he is also the holy land): believing is the entering into this rest; here is his sabbath, and the keeping of it. Keep in the faith, the gospel rest is kept. Parting with every lust that he makes manifest, observing every thing that this King calls for by his Spirit, and waiting for the further manifestation or

shining of the light of his Spirit in the heart: here is the obedience of the faith, and the holy and spiritual life and subjection of the living soul to its living King. Here is the beginning of a true Christian, his growth, his perfection; but as for times, places, persons, &c., these are of another nature, to another part; even to that part in man which is to be done away, as he comes into the faith, and into the rest. Let that which is invisible, whose habitation is out of the reasoning part, feel and read me in that which is invisible: for I do not make void the law by faith, or through publishing the ministry of the Spirit; but establish it in its ministration in the Spirit to the disciples of Christ; who keeping to the Spirit, cannot transgress the righteousness of it, though they may there learn not to esteem one day above another, but to esteem every day, no days having ever had any real holiness in them one above another; but only a figurative, or representative, which the substance, Christ and his Gospel, swallows up: for as his day dawns, those things which were the shadows of it fly away.

The Second Letter answered.

Object. 1. It is said to be "dangerous so to hold forth the spiritual sabbatism, as to deny the weekly sabbath, wherein our Lord Jesus Christ rested, &c., and which he blessed and sanctified to Adam and his posterity," &c.

Ans. The gospel is a state of substance, of fulfilling the types and shadows of the law, by bringing believers into the possession of that which they signified of. Canaan was a type of Christ, who is the land of the living, in whom every believer hath a habitation at present, according to the proportion of his faith: and the sabbath is the day of rest, which every believer is to celebrate to Christ in this holy land, which he doth by believing and obeying his Spirit in the faith, which keepeth him out of the sin, the unbelief, the unrest. But that the sabbath of the law, the rest there-

'of, which pointed to the faith, is still to be held up in the times of the gospel, I know no scripture which so teacheth, and I know somewhat which teacheth me otherwise. The day is dawned, blessed be the Lord God Almighty; the everlasting day is dawned, and the shadows of the law are flown away.

Object. 2. It is said, that "Heb. iv. speaks of three rests, the seventh day, or sabbath rest, Israel's rest in Canaan, and a remaining rest, whereof David speaks." Psa. xcv.

Ans. I grant it; there were two rests under the law, which were signs of the one rest under the gospel. The two under the law were outward and natural, the one under the gospel inward and spiritual, answerable to the state of the gospel. David was not only acquainted with the law state, but with the free spirit, (Psalm. li) and the eternal law thereof. He knew the new creation, the creating of a new spirit (with its travel through the law) and also the new rest. He knew the circumcision of the heart, the spiritual sacrifices of a broken heart and of praise; he could take the cup of salvation, and sing the song of praise to the Lord, which none can do in the strange land, nor on any other day but the day of rest. And he incites Israel to this rest, that they might not harden their hearts against it; but in the day of their visitation enter into it, by hearkening to the Word which was nigh them, which gives the entrance through the faith. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," &c. There is a rest ye are now called to enter into, as your fathers were called to enter into the land of Canaan: harden not your hearts as they did; but hear the voice, hear the word which calls to this rest, believe and enter. This rest remains, says the apostle; the others were types of it under the law state, which was to pass away.

Object. 3. It is said, "ceremonial signs are done away, but the ten commands under the mercy-seat are of another nature: and that there are signs which are not yet abolished (as the rain-bow, sun, moon, and stars), but still remain for us to make good use of."

Ans. The mercy-seat under the law is done away, and the substance thereof is come; and will ye not give him leave to write his law in the tables which he shall choose, where his disciples may read it with the eye which he gives? Is his law now to be read in the shadow, or with the outward eye, or to be looked for under the old mercy-seat of the outward tabernacle? Or is it to be read with the eye of the new creature, with the eye of faith, with the eye of the Spirit, in the everlasting gospel, where the life itself is read, and in other books or writings without, but tidings or relations of the life? Here Christ, here the Spirit, here the eternal life, here the love, the joy, the peace, the rest, the purity, which are eternal, are seen, are felt, are handled, are enjoyed: for the true faith is indeed the substance of the things hoped for, giving victory over the enemies which disturb, and a quiet habitation in him who is the rest.

And as touching signs, I do not say that signs are so done away as that there is now no good use to be made of them; but in reading the law, and shadows thereof, the Lord may please, by his Spirit, to enlighten the spirit of him who reads in his fear to see through them: but this I do not find, that so much as any one sign or shadow under the law was to be continued in that way of service under the gospel; for indeed to what end should it? When that is come which it signified, is not its work at an end? And that that sabbath was given for a sign (as well as any other sabbaths of the law) I find expressly. Exod. xxxi. 13 to 18.

Object. 4. It is said, "That though Christ's law be a new law; yet it is also old, given of old to the Jews."

Ans. Yea, it is older than so; for it was written in Abel's and the other holy men's hearts, long before this covenant of the law in writing was made with the Jews. And consider well which is now to stand in the times of the gospel, the writing of the law by the Spirit in the hearts of believers, as it was written by virtue of the promise before the law was given, or the outward and visible writing under the law, which was done for the sake of, and as a suitable dispensation for, that outward people. It was not thus from

the beginning; but after a long time: for when God chose an outward people, he chose also this way of writing to signify somewhat by; which signification is concerning another state; in which state, that which was signified is to be set up and advanced, and not the shadows which were significant of it.

It is further said, "That the Lord writes these things new in his people's hearts, to know the Lord, as their God, and as the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and as their Father in him; and to love their brethren as Christ loved them. And he writes this law also in their hearts, 'Thou shalt have no other gods but me; make no image, exalt my name, keep holy the sabbath,'" &c.

Ans. If God write these things in the heart, are they not to be read there? If God write them in the new covenant, and in the new tables, shall not I read them there? And if I can read there in this living book what God writes in it by his Spirit, is not this nearer to me, and clearer, and read by a more certain eye, than what I can read with my outward eye in tables of stone? Oh! do not turn the believer out of his way: do not hinder him from reading in the book, which is clear and infallible, the clear and infallible things of God. Will God write in my heart, and will he not give me an eye to read? Shall he give me an eye to read, and shall I not read therewith? Thou hast here confessed this to be the new writing, and the new writing belongs to the new covenant; both which are proper to the gospel state, and to Christ's mediation, who is Mediator of the new covenant. Heb. viii. 6. "And in that he saith, a new, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." ver. 13.

Object. 5. It is said, "That love being the sum and substance of the law of the Spirit, makes no more against the fourth commandment than against the rest."

Ans. Love is the substance of them all, and they are all fulfilled in it; but they are not after this manner fulfilled; to wit, that a man should strive particularly to keep them in his eye, and so labor to fulfil them in love; but rather thus,

in waiting on the Lord, to receive love from him, and to be kept by him in the love; in this love received they are all fulfilled, and cannot be broken, and this is an easy yoke. This is the new birth, and the path thereof; the other is but the old creature, with its striving after the path and inheritance of life. And as this love is the fulfilling of the law, so the heart is the tables of this love, wherein God writeth both the whole and all the parts of his law. Now I am not against any man, who, in singleness of heart, applies himself to the letter; yet it is but the old way, and a conversing with Christ after the manner of Moses' dispensation; but I must confess that I am for the new covenant, and for the ministry of the Spirit, which is far beyond the letter; and though I have known Christ and the laws of his life after the flesh; yet henceforth my desire is not after knowing him so any more, but to know him in the eternal life of his Spirit, and to drink of the fruit of the vine, new with him in his Father's kingdom.

A BRIEF

EXPLICATION

OF THE MYSTERY OF THE

SIX DAYS' LABOR,

AND

SEVENTH DAY'S SABBATH,

For such to behold, the eye of whose Spirit is opened by the pure Anointing; and who are not so drowned in their Conceivings and Reasonings about the Sense of the letter, as most of the Professors of this Age are.

Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Mat. xi. 28, 29, 30.

He that hears the joyful sound of the ever-living power, calling him by the voice of his eternal light out of the darkness, out of the death, out of the misery, out of the dominions, territories, and deep slavery of Satan unto himself, and cometh unto him in the virtue and power of that life which calleth, he hath a taste given him of the eternal rest, and a promise of entering into it.

But the entrance into the fulness thereof is not presently; but he hath a long journey to take from Egypt, the dark land; from Sodom, the filthy land; from Babylon, where all the vessels and holy things of God have been defiled, through the wilderness unto Canaan; and many battles are

to be fought with enemies by the way, and also with the enemies which possess the holy land; and many hardships to be undergone in following the Captain, who also leadeth his Israel by a pillar of cloud by day, and by a pillar of fire by night; and there must be a circumcision and baptism in the cloud and in the sea, and the falling of all those carcasses in the wilderness, which are not to enter, nor so much as see, the good land, before the entrance be ministered to the seed, and to that which passeth through the water and through the fire with the seed. In plain terms, there must be a taking up of the yoke, and a learning of Christ under the yoke, till the proud, the stiff, the stubborn, the wise, the wilful, the selfish spirit, the hard, stony heart, be wasted and worn out by the cross, and nothing left but what becomes one with the seed, and so is fit to be married to it, and to enter with it into the everlasting kingdom.

Now this bearing the yoke, this taking up of the cross, this following of Christ in the wilderness, through the corrections of the Father, through the buffetings and temptations of the enemy, in the midst of all the weaknesses and frailties of the flesh, going when he bids go, standing still where he stops, fighting when he prepares for the warfare, bearing the repulse when he suffers the enemy to prevail, and hoping, even beyond hope, for his relief and victory in due season: here is the labor, here is the travail, here is the working under the life, with the measure of grace and power received from the life. So that, first, the day-spring from on high visits; from that visitation there is light entered into the heart; by closing with that light there is grace received; with this grace received there is work to be done for God; his talent is to be improved all the six days, by all that will rest with him on the seventh, and that desire to cease from their labors in the fruition of the faith, the life, the power; the power living, becoming, and performing all in them. And he that doth not improve the talent; he that doth not follow on in the pure light, but either sits down by the way, or is deceived with an image of what once was true in him, he can never arrive at the land of rest (though

perhaps he may arrive at that which he may call so), but when the eternal witness awakes in him, he will find the want of it, and bitterly bewail his grievous mistake.

Now in this hard travail and grievous labor under the close laws and spiritual commandments of the life (hard I mean, yea, very hard, to the unrenewed part, though easy and natural to that part which is renewed and born of God), it pleaseth the Lord now and then to give a day of refreshment, causing his life so powerfully to spring up, that it even sensibly is and doeth all in the heart. This is a sabbath, wherein the soul rests in the powerful movings and operations of the life, and doth not find any stress of trouble, or hardship, or labor upon it; but sits still in the power, is at ease in the life, in the eternal virtue, which lives, and moves, and is all in it; and no pain, no trouble, no grievousness of any command is felt; but to it all is easy, all is natural, all is purely pleasant; the life (to which all its own laws, statutes, ordinances, judgments, ways, and paths are easy) performing all it calls for, even as fast as it calls for it. And here, not only a sabbath of days, but also a sabbath of weeks, yea, sometimes a sabbath of years (besides the everlasting jubilee, or year of perfect redemption itself) is known and witnessed by such as have waited on the Lord in singleness of heart, under the yoke of his Spirit, for the bringing down of the rough and untoward nature, and for the raising up of the meek and lowly heart.

But here it is exceeding easy running out, and starting aside; it is easy running out from under the yoke, to avoid the bitterness of the hardship to the earthly part; it is much easier running out on the day of rest, and so losing the truth in a joy and rejoicing, even such a one as might have a true ground. Oh! who can but think the bitterness of death is past, when all enemies are vanished, and there is nothing left but the Lord and the soul embracing each other! And who can but be unwilling to come back again to his labor, and to the residue of his hard travail afterward? And yet it is far better to return to the work in the vineyard, and to suffer again with the seed, than to keep up the

rest in a notion, and so to lose the life and pure presence and virtue of the seed, when it returns unto, and calls back to the labor. Oh, how many have perished here! suffering a divorce from that which led them into the rest, not being willing to go back again with it to fill up the residue of its sufferings, which were yet behind, and so have kept up a false, dead, notional rest, after the true sabbath was ended.

Now there is no way for such, but to wait to feel the living breath, the quickening virtue, the day-spring from on high, which, by the brightness of its rising, can discover this false rest, this dead rest, this notional rest, this ease in the earthly, in the fleshly, in the understanding part, which they uphold by things they have formerly gathered from the Scriptures, or from their own (perhaps once living) experiences; but now hold out of the feeling and possession of the life, in the dead part. But that it is thus with them they can never see, until the light from which they have erred spring up and discover it to them; and when the light doth arise and discover it, they will find the way of return, and the path of redemption, much more difficult to them than it was at first: yet it is better to part with the ease of the flesh, and to undergo the pangs of a new birth, than to miss of the inheritance in the good land.

There are three steps or degrees of the blessed estate: First, there are *desires*, thirstings, and breathings, *begotten after the life*. Secondly, there is *a labering in the service* (under the yoke) *by the virtue which springs from the life*. Thirdly, there is a *rest*, or sitting down at ease *in the life*. By the stirring of life in the soul, desires after life are kindled. He in whom the desires are kindled, and who feeleth the eternal virtue, cannot but be running the race; he whom the Spirit of the Lord findeth faithful in running the race, it pleaseth the Lord ever and anon to be giving him a taste of the rest. Thus the spring stirring, the soul cannot but move towards its centre; and as it entereth into and fixeth in its centre, it partaketh of the rest. Now to know the leadings of the Spirit forward and backward into these, into desires, when he pleaseth; into the labor and service of the life, when he

pleaseth; into the sweet rest and perfect repose in the life, when he pleaseth; here is the safety and sweet progress of the renewed spirit. That man who is born of the Spirit is to wait for the movings, breathings, and kindlings of the Spirit in him: and when the Sun ariseth, he is to go forth to his labor in the light thereof, and in the night and withdrawing of the Sun, to retire; and when his seventh day of rest comes, he is to receive it from, and enjoy it in, the Spirit; and afterwards to be willing to begin his week again, even till his whole race and the full course of his pilgrimage be finished. Yet if it were possible for man, after he is come to Christ, to abide perfectly with him, to cease from lust, to keep within the faith, to draw naturally in the yoke, to bow in the spirit continually to the Father of spirits, there would be a continual sabbath kept in the passage, even before the great, full, and perfect sabbath in the end. The hardness and uneasiness of the labor is because of a part contrary to the life, which, when it is worn out, there will be no more labor, but the yoke will become the rest, and all the motions and operations of life will flow forth naturally in the rest. And here is "the patience and faith of the saints," to wait under the yoke, under the daily cross to that part which is to be brought and kept under, till all the bonds of captivity be broken through by the life, and the veil of flesh rent from the top to the bottom (the remaining of which is that which stops the free current of life), and then shall the soul enter into the holy of holies, obtaining the full possession of the everlasting inheritance, and of the eternal redemption, and know sorrow, tears, bonds, sickness, death, captivity (no not so much as grappling with them, or travelling out of them) no more; but the enjoyment of the plenty and fulness of the life, reaping all the pleasant fruits of life in the rich land of life for evermore.

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

PROPOUNDED TO THE

JEWS,

That they may Hear and Consider, and their Hearts at length may be turned towards that which alone is able to Convert them to God; that they may once more become his People, and enter into an Everlasting Covenant with him that may not be broken; that so they may abide in his Love and Covenant of LIFE, and remain his People for ever.

Consideration 1. *What great love, mercy, and kindness God showed to that people, above all nations and peoples under heaven!* Of his own free love he set his heart upon them, choosing them to be a people to himself. He brought them out of Egypt, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; he mightily preserved them in, and led them through, the wilderness. He entered into a covenant with them to become their God, and betrothed them unto himself for his own lot and inheritance. He gave them righteous laws, judgments, statutes, and ordinances, both of worship towards him, and of an upright demeanor and conversation among themselves, and towards all men. He drove out the heathen from before them, and gave them a pleasant land to possess, even *the glory of all lands*, a land flowing with milk and honey. He built a habitation for himself among them; first a moving sanctuary or tabernacle, afterwards a

more settled abiding place or temple (which Solomon built), wherein was the ark of his presence, where he was to be sought unto and inquired of by them, and towards which their prayers were to be directed; and there was a mercy-seat, whereof they had large experience; and he ever and anon sent prophets among them, to reprove their errors and backslidings, and to set them to rights again. He raised up judges likewise to defend them; and although they were weary of his government, desiring a king, after the manner of the nations, so vehemently, that they even forced a king from him, yet he took him away from them, and after him, chose "a man after his own heart, to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance; who fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands." What should I say more? What was wanting of love, of care, of goodness, of kindness, of mercy, of gentleness, of any thing that a people could desire of their God? I say, what was wanting of all this on God's part? What could he have done more for his vineyard than he did do? Nay, he emptied upon them all the goodness, all the mercy, love, favor, &c., that that covenant would hold to the full; yea, and more too; for he bare with them more than that covenant required him to bear, and redeemed them oftener than that covenant engaged him; "yea, many times turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath," as he might often have done according to the tenor of that covenant. "Yea, in all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them:" and he was still ready to say in his heart, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie;" at length they will see their error, repent, and be true to me; insomuch as he was never weary of saving them, of trying them again and again; of stirring up his bowels of love and pity to redeem them; of sending his servants and prophets among them to warn and reclaim them, even till at last it was manifest, that there was no remedy but he must cast them off, and provoke them to jealousy by a foolish nation, Deut. xxxii. 20, 21. drawing them nigh to him, who had been worshipping stocks

and stones; making them become a people, who had long been no people; and casting these out of his sight, making them become no people, who had so long been his chosen, peculiar people, in covenant with him, and nigh unto him, above all the families of the earth.

Consideration 2. *What constant rebellion and stiffness of spirit that people all along expressed towards the Lord!* What wild, sour grapes they still brought forth to him; sour love, sour obedience, sour worship and sacrifices, such as the pure palate of the Lord could find no relish nor savor in: but as Moses had told them, that it was not for their righteousness God chose them to give them the good land to possess, for they were a rebellious and stiff-necked people; Deut. ix. 6, 7. so it was not for their goodness that God continued his love to them, for they were all along provoking him. Jer. xliv. 4. When God came to show that great mercy to them of redeeming them out of Egypt, and bid them cast away their idols, they would not cast away their idols, Ezek. xx. 7, 8. neither did they regard that mercy of redemption from the house of bondage, and from the iron furnace; but said to Moses, it was better for them to stay in Egypt, and to serve the Egyptians. Exod. xiv. 12. Again in the wilderness, how did they provoke him all those forty years of mercy; how did they err in their hearts from his pure fear, and from love to him, and from faith and confidence in him! How did they murmur against him, and against Moses and Aaron, their leaders! How did they forget his works and his wonders continually! When they came near the land, and should have gone in to possess it, then they would not, but repined and rebelled because of the tallness and strength of the enemy, and of their cities; and when they were forbid to go, then they would go and fight with them. What should I mention the time of the judges and of the kings; how often the Lord made them smart by their enemies in their own land; how often he gave them up to captivity out of their land, even till at length that great captivity of Babylon

befell them, and since that a greater captivity and desolation than that of Babylon.

Consideration 3. Whether God, having tried this people even to the utmost, by that covenant which he made with them by Moses in Mount Sinai, may ever please to try them so any more: or if there yet remain any mercy or love from God towards them, whether it is not to be expected another way, and upon another account? This is very necessary and profitable for them to consider, that they may not be looking that way for mercy and favor from God; in which it is never to come, and so have their eyes and hearts diverted from that way according to which it is to come; for this must needs put them back exceedingly, if their eyes be looking out one way, and the love of God hath chosen another channel to run towards them in. This may make them refuse the very mercy, love, and redemption, when it comes, suspecting it not to be it, because it comes not in the way, and after the manner, that they look for it. Now God hath expressly said, that when he shall be pacified in them, and shall look again upon them with an eye of favor, to do them good, it shall not be by their covenant (which could never last, but was still broken on their parts), but by his own everlasting covenant, which he would establish to them. Ezek. xvi. 60, &c. It should therefore diligently be inquired by them, What covenant it is which is called their covenant. ver. 61. And what covenant it is which is called God's covenant. ver. 62. That they may withdraw their eyes and hopes from the one, from whence their redemption, recovery, and mercy cannot come, towards the other from whence it is to come? To which query, for their sakes, it is in my heart to return this answer.

Ans. Their covenant is that which they entered into with God, the covenant that their hearts chose to unite with God by: and that was to this effect, "That if God would show them his will, they would obey it. Go thou near," said they to Moses "and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it." Deut. v. 27.

Thus they thought, but the Lord knew otherwise: for "Oh" saith the Lord, "that there were such a heart in them!" &c. ver. 29. and Moses knew otherwise, he knew that they would "corrupt themselves, and that evil would befall them in the latter days." Deut. xxxi. 29. But God's covenant was the free covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the covenant of his grace, the covenant of his free love, whereby he was able to reach them in Egypt, upon the cry of the seed in them (in the midst of their idolatries, and to bring them out and do them good, notwithstanding their stubbornness and stiff-neckedness), even before the other covenant was made; this covenant of love was God's covenant. This is the covenant God remembered to them in the days of their youth, while they were young and tender, and not yet grown up to be a people under the other covenant; and this is the covenant which lasts for ever, which is not founded upon their obedience, but on God's free love to them for his own name's sake, and for their father's sake with whom he freely made it.

Quest. What doth this covenant contain?

Ans. Putting his fear in the heart, writing his laws in the mind, pouring of pure, clear water upon them to wash away the pollutions of their inward parts, circumcising the filth of the heart, healing the backsliding nature by creating of a right spirit within, and keeping of the created spirit right by the presence of that Spirit which created it. see Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. Ezek. xxxvi 25, &c. Hosea xiv. 4. This is God's covenant, this is the new covenant, which is to be made with the house of Israel and Judah when God redeems them; and they can never be redeemed but by this covenant, but are to remain desolate, until the Spirit be poured out from on high upon them, Isa. xxxii. 15. until their hearts be circumcised to love the Lord their God, until his fear be placed there, and they thereby caused to walk in his ways. As therefore they receive the Spirit, are brought into the fear, have the law written on their minds, and become subject thereto, so will they taste of this covenant, be brought into redemption by it, and become a

glory inwardly, and outwardly also upon the earth.

Quest. What is the way for them to have the fear of God put in their hearts, to have their hearts circumcised, to receive the Spirit and his laws into their minds, and so to come into this covenant?

Ans. There is no other way but that to which Moses himself directed them, after God had made the other covenant with them, and tried them long by it, together with many temptations, signs and wonders, both before and after it; and seeing that by all these they had not a heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, Moses at length directs them to another covenant, the word whereof would give them eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart to understand. Which covenant was a covenant besides the former, Deut. xxix. 1. and was indeed the covenant concerning life or death eternal, chap. xxx. 15. (the other being but a covenant of their outward state, made with them after their coming out of Egypt, upon their deliverance therefrom, and according to their choice to become a people to God according to it.) This word, Moses tells them, was near them (nearer than that which was spoken by God on the mount, and afterwards written on tables of stone). The voice of this word and the commandment thereof was nearer, that they need not seek anywhere abroad for it, but only listen at home to hear its speech, obey it in the faith, and live for ever. Deut xxx. 11, &c. This is the way for them and all men to come into this covenant, and there is no other; there is a light shining in the darkness of man's heart, which springs up in him, and casts forth its rays to discover and draw him out of the darkness: now as this light is felt, loved, understood, in spirit, hearkened and cleaved to in the pure faith, which it begets; that which cleaves to it, is drawn out of the darkness by it, into the covenant of the pure, eternal light, where God is, and whither all they are translated, who are drawn to him in and by this covenant, as they are kept, preserved, and continue in the faith, love, and obedience of it. Now I would yet put these few things more to them.

First, Whether that people of the Jews, as they stood related to God in that covenant (given by Moses at Mount Horeb), with the covenant itself, and all things appertaining thereto, were not a shadow of some inward and spiritual thing afterwards to appear and be made manifest in its season. Whether they themselves were not a shadow of a more inward and spiritual people, to be gathered to God by the inward and spiritual covenant; and whether their outward covenant was not a shadow or visible representation of that covenant, and the laws of it a shadow or representation of the inward laws, which were to be written in the hearts of that spiritual people? Was not their tabernacle, or temple, a shadow of the true tabernacle, or temple; seeing God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in a poor, humble, contrite spirit, and in the heart that trembles at his word? Isa. lvii. 15. and chap. lxvi. 1, 2. So was not their circumcision a shadow of the circumcision which is to pass upon the hearts of God's chosen? Were not their sacrifices types, or representations, of the sacrifices of praise and of a broken heart? Psa. li. 17. and Psa. l. 14. Was not their Canaan, or holy land, a type of the true, holy, spiritual rest, which the faith gives entrance into? Their city Jerusalem, a type of the Jehovah-shamma? Their priests and Levites, types of the spiritual priesthood, which was to offer the pure offering and spiritual sacrifices among the Gentiles? Malachi i. 11. Mark that place, if it did not plainly foretell the casting off of the Jews, with the rejecting of their offerings, priests, and Levites, and God's raising up a seed among the Gentiles, where he would have a more acceptable people and worship, even a pure, spiritual people, and a pure, spiritual offering.

Secondly, If they were types, representations, or shadows of somewhat spiritual to come, then were they not to give place to that which is spiritual when it came, and so to be swallowed up in it? Is not the spiritual glory the glory? The inward Jew, the Jew inward? The circumcision of the heart, the choice circumcision? The offering up of praise and of a broken heart, the acceptable sacrifice? The land

of life and righteousness, the true land of rest to the living by faith? Is not the spiritual city, house, or temple which God builds, the Jerusalem or temple of the new covenant? Is not this the choice house to God? And is not this spiritual glory to be expected in the days of the Messiah, and all the types and shadows of Moses, which pointed at him, to end in him, when once he comes to set up his true, inward, invisible, substantial glory among his inward and spiritual people? When the day of Messiah dawns, shall not Moses' shadows fly away? Oh that your eyes were opened to behold the inward glory of life, the good things of the new covenant, the great treasure and riches which are revealed and possessed in the Spirit by the spirits that are redeemed unto God, that ye might partake thereof; and then your eye would not be so much on that which is outward; which, if ye had, even to the utmost of your desire, is not comparable to the inward!

Lastly, Search the prophets, see if the Messiah is not first to come in a despisable way, as a man of sorrows, Isa. liii. 2, 3. whose visage in that appearance was to be more marred than any man's. Isa. lii. 14. And consider whether he was not to be cut off, though not for himself, Dan. ix. 26. and then to sit at the right hand of God, until his enemies be made his footstool, Psa. cx. 1. before he come in that glory wherein ye expect him. So that if he be not thus come already, then that coming of his is yet to be expected, and his hands and feet are yet to be pierced by you, and then afterwards ye may look upon him whom ye have pierced, Zech. xii. 10. and all the families of Israel mourn bitterly apart for it. ver. 12.

When Moses gave the law, the veil was over his face; your fathers were not able to bear the light wherein the law was given, nor the light wherein the prophecies of the prophets were given; and so they still erred from the law, were offended at the prophets while they were alive, and misunderstood their words after their death. Now do not ye search into Moses and the prophets in the same spirit of error as your fathers did, being shut out from the light of

them, even as they were? If it be thus, if the veil be over your hearts, if ye be ignorant of the true light, of the true eternal power wherein the Scriptures were given forth, ye must needs misunderstand them, misunderstand Moses, misunderstand the prophets, misunderstand the things spoken concerning the Messiah; and so not be able to see unto the end of those things ministered by Moses, and of that ministration which was to pass away; nor into the beginning of the ministration of the Messiah, which was to succeed it. Oh, turn within to the word nigh in the heart! that the true Jew may be begotten and formed in you, and his light may arise and overspread you; that in that light ye may see the light of Moses, and the light of the prophets, and not gather false meanings from their words, but understand them aright in the same holy Spirit, and enjoy the blessedness they spake of and directed to, which lies in the inward raising up of an inward seed, and not in an outward conformity of the outward man, while the heart and mind remains unchanged and unrenewed; which can never be made new by any ministry of the letter without the Spirit, but alone by the ministry of the Spirit, whether with or without the letter, as he pleaseth.

I. P.

SOME

QUERIES

CONCERNING

The Work of God in the World, which is to be expected in the latter Ages thereof;

With a few

Plain Words to the Nation of England, tending towards stopping the future breakings forth of God's Wrath, both upon the People and Powers thereof;

With an advertisement relating to the present State of Things.

Query 1. WHETHER the kingdoms of the earth shall not one day become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, wherein the Lord God Omnipotent shall reign, and man's glory and greatness fall, that God alone may be exalted in that day? Rev. xi. 15. 17. Isa. ii. 11, 12. xvii. 22.

Query 2. When shall this be? Whether this is not to be expected upon the recovery out of the antichristian apostasy? Whether the man-child is not then to be expected to be so born and brought forth, as to rule all nations with a rod of iron? Rev. xix. 6. and chap. xii. 5.

Query 3. When the Son of man comes to take the government to himself, to give forth the law out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, Isa. ii.-3. whether he shall find faith on the earth? Whether he shall find the kings and powers of the earth ready to receive him, and the professors willing to submit themselves unto him? Or whether they shall generally combine against

him, and he be fain to overcome them, before he can reign over them? Luke xviii. 8. Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 14. Psa. ii. 2, 3.

Query 4. Why these things may not be expected in this our day, and be already begun in this our nation, seeing so many strange things have happened among us, as have not in many foregoing ages: God having so strangely raised up a generation to do service for him, and so strangely again brought them down, when they had so long and so often showed themselves unworthy of, and unfit for, so great a service, by still seeking themselves, and forgetting the Lord that raised them!

Query 5. How the kingdoms of the earth are to become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ? Whether it be not by taking his yoke upon them, by submitting to his laws, his cords, and bands? By giving up whatsoever is unjust, unrighteous, harsh, and oppressive; and coming under the bands of righteousness, meekness, and equity? Psa. ii. 10, 11. Matt. xi. 29.

Query 6. Whether the Lord be arisen to shake terribly or no (as was long ago prophesied he should. Isa. ii. 19.)? For the Lord will once more shake both heaven and earth. Heb. xii. 26. There hath been a sore shaking in this nation: the foundations of government, yea, the very foundations of religion have been shaken, that that which cannot stand might be removed out of the way, and give place to that which cannot be shaken. ver. 27. Consider therefore whether these be the beginnings of the great and terrible day of the Lord God Almighty, or only some such ordinary shakings as used to happen according to the course of kingdoms and states, which are subject to changes, alterations, and dissettlement?

Query 7. When God beginneth to shake the heaven and earth in nations (according to that great shaking, which is to be after the antichristian apostasy, Rev. iv. and chap. vi.) whether there ever can be any firm settlement again upon the old foundations? There may appear some hopes and probability of a settlement again, which man may be tempted to fasten upon; but this will but provoke God to

shake more effectually: for when God once ariseth to shake, he will not give over till he hath made that fall, which he began to shake. Rev. xi. 13. *O England, take heed!*

Query 8. How the kings, powers, and nations of the earth may secure their standing in that day? Whether there be any way for them so to do, and what is that way? Whether there be any other way but kissing the Son, submitting to his bands, being willing to be bound with the chains of righteousness, love, and meekness, from all unrighteousness and oppression, both relating to their fellow-creatures and to his people? Psa. ii. 12. and cxlix. 8.

Come, O nation of England, be bound! O powers of this nation, take the Lord's yoke upon you; seek righteousness, seek meekness, seek the good of all; not in words and pretences, but in truth and uprightness. Seek out that which is of God in every one of your hearts, and let that govern for God. Do not smite any for obedience to the living God, but come ye also under his yoke, that what is not of God in yourselves, but an enemy to your souls, may be yoked down; and let all laws be formed, directed, and managed, to reach the unrighteous, that the rod of the wicked may not always lie upon the lot of the righteous, Psa. cxxv. 3. nor oppression and self-will sit in the seat of judgment, and pass (because of its power and authority) for righteousness. Eccl. iii. 16. and iv. 1. O ye powers of England! save yourselves and this nation from the terrible stroke of God, which is very near. And let not this following advice be disdained by you, but consider seriously of it.

Take heed how you call any to account for what they have done against you. There was an extraordinary hand of God in these things; and in falling foul upon instruments, ye may clash against him before you are aware. For their iniquity the Lord hath laid them aside, and raised you up again, giving you another day of trial; let that suffice, and look now to your own standing, that ye also do not fall by following their example of iniquity and unrighteousness. But if you will call them to account for any thing, let it be for being unfaithful to God and the people of this nation, to

whom they made large promises, but performed little. And that which God required of them (and the nation had reason to expect from them) do ye now perform. Give all men the liberty of their consciences towards God; let them follow him out of the fashions, customs, and worships of the world without interruption; and let there also be a narrow search after what is unjust, unrighteous, and oppressive in any kind; and as fast as it is discovered let it be removed, that the nation may grow out of vanity, out of unrighteousness, into solidity and righteousness; and that the fear of offending man may not affright any from fearing, obeying, and worshipping of God in Spirit and truth, as he requireth; and then God will bless this nation and the powers of it. For the Lord God taketh not pleasure in overturning of nations, or breaking in pieces the powers thereof: yet if they will by no means hearken, but harden their hearts, and stand in the way of his counsel and design, he cannot spare them. Isa. xxvii. 4. Therefore stand not in battle against him, but bow before him, O ye great ones of the earth! become low and little, that his wrath may pass by you; let go your own strength and greatness, and take hold of his strength, that ye may make peace with him, ver. 5. and do not go about to limit the Spirit of God in his people; that will most certainly ruin you! The Lord God hath begun to bestow his Spirit upon his sons and daughters, as in days of old, even as before the great apostasy and erring from it; and he requireth their obedience to it; and who may safely forbid or punish them therefore. Much lies upon this land in this respect; oh, do not add more, lest ye sink the nation and yourselves! Now a little to help the nation and powers thereof the better to digest the work of God, that they may not run on headily against him to their own ruin and destruction, let these two things following be considered.

1. Whether the people of God, in the days of the apostles, were not a separated people; a people gathered out of nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, (gathered out of the Jewish worship, gathered out of the Heathenish worship) and separated to God?

2. Whether, after the antichristian apostasy, there are not a people to be gathered again, and separated again, from all antichristian ways of worship, even after the manner as they were before the apostasy from the Heathenish and Jewish worship? And so the same gospel which gathered at first, is, after the apostasy, to be preached to gather men again. Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

Consider well of these things, that ye may not set yourselves against the Lord, to cross him in this work in this nation. Ye cannot hinder him from gathering his people now out of the apostatized state, no more than the Jews or Heathens could hinder him from gathering his elect then out of their corrupt states. The reformation out of popery was very weak and imperfect; the Lord waited long for the perfecting of it; but instead thereof, there was rather a running backwards towards it again. The Lord hath now at length begun the work himself, letting forth his Spirit upon his people, and gathering many into it, and is preparing the stones of his temple for his building, and he will assuredly build up his church again; ye cannot possibly stop him herein: ye may break yourselves by attempting to remove this burdensome stone out of your way (for indeed it doth lie somewhat offensively in the way of all settlements and governments according to the fleshly wisdom); but it will fall upon and break all that burden themselves with it, though not by outward might or power, yet by that Spirit of life and righteousness which is in it, which the Lord is with to prosper. Consider these things in meekness, righteousness, and in the fear of the Lord; even in that Spirit which is fit to act for God, and not against him.

An advertisement to the powers and people of this nation.

Because of my dear love to my native country, and because of the dregs of that cup which the Lord hath already caused it to drink of, which cannot be spared unless the Lord's will be effected without it; which dregs are so bitter, terrible, and dreadful, as will make the stoutest hearts to faint, and the most confident countenance wax pale: I say, for this cause, in love am I constrained to add these few lines more, that, if it be possible, this nation may apply itself, in the fear and dread of the eternal majesty and power, to make its peace with him against whom it hath long warred (not only by much outward wickedness, looseness, vanity, and profaneness, but more especially by setting up an invented form of godliness, and persecuting the power), and to whom it is not yet reconciled in this matter, nor found so much as willing to be reconciled.

The Lord God of heaven and earth, of glory, of majesty, of everlasting power, victory, and dominion over all, who made both heaven and earth, and hath the command of all things therein, he disposeth of nations, of governments, of earthly powers according to his pleasure, and who may say unto him, what dost thou? Who may implead him for making a rich nation poor, a strong nation weak, or for bringing down the high and mighty, the strong, stout, honorable, and noble in a nation, and exalting the poor, the mean, the persecuted? And if he turn his hand again, and lay them flat whom he had lifted up, and exalt the other even unlooked-for, who can withstand him, or who can contradict him?

Now what is in the Lord's heart (who is thus mighty and absolute) he will certainly bring to pass, how unlikely, how contrary, how impossible soever it seem to the eye of man. If he will exalt his despised truth (which always was so to the eye of the great and wise ones of this world),

or give his people liberty to fear, worship, and obey him; if he will have truth and righteousness have the dominion in men's hearts, and in the nations, and not in the wills and lusts of men, how great and powerful soever; I say, if this be his intent, though generation should rise up after generation to oppose him herein, yet will he be too hard for them all, and they will all fall before him: and his truth, his people, his holy, eternal counsel will he raise up, and cause to triumph over them all.

It is man's way to settle himself by outward strength against outward strength, and then he thinks he is safe; not eying the invisible hand which turns the wheels, and delights to overturn that which is outwardly strong (and seemeth unremovable), when it forgetteth him, and opposeth itself against him. The Lord God loves to take his enemies at the strongest, when they are most wise, most mighty, even when nothing seems able to deal with them but himself. This was it overthrew the foregoing powers one after another; they were courting worldly interest, and strengthening themselves that way; but overlooking God who raised them, and the work which he had raised them to accomplish. This turned the hand against them which had been for them, and how then could they maintain their standing?

Oh! that the present generation could see the ticklishness of their standing, and consider that this is their day of trial, and that the Lord's eye is upon them, to observe their ways, to see whether they will now mind righteousness, and the liberty of his people better than formerly they did; and that his truth may, in its life and power (and not in such a form or way of worship as they may think good to prescribe), have its scope in the nation. The Lord's eye and heart is upon his truth, and upon his people; and as nations or powers deal with that, so will he deal with them. Oh! therefore be not deceived; for though the Lord hath often-times long suffered his people to lie under reproach and persecution (as he did Israel in Egypt for divers ages), yet at length he hath still heard their groans, and hath arisen to deliver them: and though Pharoah afterwards with all his strength

went after them, and made no question but to bring them back again under his subjection (and there was nothing in appearance able to deliver them from him), yet he could not, but overthrew himself and his strength utterly. Ye know not what strong cries and tears were put up to the Lord before these late changes, that righteousness might be established in the nation, and that his people might have liberty to worship him in his fear, and according to the leadings of his Spirit, without being yoked under any form of worship which their hearts could not own to be of God. And when the Long Parliament was unexpectedly raised up, that was looked upon by many to have been the means God would have used towards the effecting of this: and we cannot deny but that God did make use of them in some things for good, for which his name was honored. But though that instrument did warp, becoming unfaithful to the Lord, diverting from his work and service, towards the seeking and establishing of themselves and their own interests, and so are at length themselves justly therefore fallen; yet the work of the Lord is not fallen, as relating to himself; though, because of the unfaithfulness and self-seeking of the instruments which he began to use, at present it lieth under much reproach (and that justly as relating to them); yet, for all this, the Lord himself can bring it about again, and carry it on with better advantage to his name, truth, and people, than if it had gone on in their hand: and the more men set themselves to oppose it, the more glory will God get to himself in effecting it.

Let not, therefore, my true love to the nation, and to the present powers thereof, be despised by them: but let them fear before the mighty God of heaven and earth, and in their hearts bow to him, that they may be humbled, and made fit instruments in his hand for his service, and not be found enemies against him. If they will be fit instruments for God to work by, they must be meek, lowly, poor in spirit, waiting in God's fear for his counsel, and not hearken to the fleshly wisdom of man, which is his utter enemy, and will persuade, advise, and instruct them to settle the nation

and church (as they call it) in a way contrary to him. And remember this word: *Be sure you smite none for obedience to God. Limit not his Holy Spirit in his people; but limit the unclean and evil spirit in those who manifest themselves not to be his people.* This is the true intent of government. How can he who governs aright under God, hurt that which is of God, and for God? Or how can he spare that which his sword is given him to cut down? Oh, how happy were it for the nation, if they would let truth have its scope, and let righteousness overcome them! and not contend for shadows against the substance; but let the substance overcome all those shadows which have held it in bondage, and upheld its enemy.

The great enemy of God, all this night of the apostasy, hath been antichrist; who hath not been an open enemy only, but hath appeared as if he had been for Christ, commanding the worshipping and honoring of Christ, yea, and with a great zeal taking upon him to cause people to worship according to what he determined to be right: and thus he getteth into the temple, erecting a usurping authority over the conscience, setting up and compelling to an invented worship.

Against this kind of worship God hath still been raising witnesses: but he having the powers of the earth on his side (as was prophesied he should, Rev. xvii. 13.), hath often prevailed over them. Rev. xiii. 7. And so the truth hath been suppressed, and false worships set up by the powers of the earth, according to the proportion they have drunk of the golden cup of fornication; which doth not only deceive in one way of manifest and gross false worship, but hath many mixtures and mysteries of deceit in it. Rev. xvii. 2, &c.

Now God hath a time to call for an account of the sufferings and blood of his saints. Rev. vi. 10, 11. He hath a time to judge the great whore. Rev. xvii. 1. And when the time of God's judgment comes upon the earth, God begins with his own house first, and so with that which hath taken upon it to separate from Babylon, to see what he can find of Babylon therein; and he will judge that before he

fall upon the great body of the mystery of iniquity. 1 Pet. iv. 17. Heb. x. 30.

Now, therefore, it behoves this nation to consider what of Babylon may be found in it, and to part with it, that it may escape the plagues of Babylon, Rev. xviii. 4. which are very bitter, as ver. 7, 8, &c. these are the two main things whereof Babylon is guilty:

1. An invented form of worship, a likeness of the true worship; but not the true worship itself.

2. A persecuting and endeavoring to suppress the power of the truth, even of the purity of the godly religion and worship, by means of this form; because for conscience' sake, men, who are taught otherwise by the spirit of God, cannot submit and subject thereto.

This God is coming down to plead with in that great city, Babylon; and this God will first plead with in thee, O England! Consider what of this is yet remaining in thee (or what of this thy heart hankers after), and part with it as thou lovest thy peace. The Lord is the witness of the integrity and fidelity of my heart to thee in these lines. It will be hard for thee to escape the Lord's hand; yet it is not impossible. If thou bow before the mighty God, and lie abased in spirit at his feet, he can open that eye in thee which can let thee see thy danger, and also the way how to escape it.

I. P.

THE

CONSIDERATION

OF

A POSITION

CONCERNING THE

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

AS ALSO

OF SOME PARTICULARS HELD FORTH FOR TRUTHS,
BY ONE EDMUND ELLIS, STYLED A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL OF
JESUS CHRIST.

WITH

A WARNING OF TENDER BOWELS TO THE RULERS, TEACHERS, AND
PEOPLE OF THIS NATION, CONCERNING THEIR
CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

LIKEWISE

A few Words concerning the Kingdom, Laws,
and Government of CHRIST in the Heart and Conscience;
its Inoffensiveness to all just laws and governments
of the kingdoms of men.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. Rev. xvi. 15.

PREFACE.

CHRIST, the eternal Son of God, the substance of all the types and shadows of the law, was made a priest to God, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. He came in the power of the Father; he received the power, he ministered the power, and in the power. Thus he gathered together living stones, built them into a living temple for the Father of life to dwell in, that they may be filled with the power, dwell in the power, and be to the glory of the power. The church of Israel, the church of the Old Testament, the church of Moses, was gathered by the letter, was to be ordered by the letter, was to keep and observe the law of the letter, was to have priests and sacrifices according to the letter; but the New Testament church was to be of true Jews, of Jews gathered in the power, circumcised by the power, renewed in the power, &c. So that he is not a Jew any longer, who is one outward, nor that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter. We are the circumcision, saith the apostle, which worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh. The New Testament state is a state of substance, even of that spiritual substance which the law held out in shadows. The Jew is inward, the circumcision inward, the sacrifices inward, the church inward, the ministry inward, the worship inward: all is in spirit, in life, in power, in virtue; the whole state is answerable to the High-priest of our profession, even after the power of the endless life. By the eternal Spirit was he made a minister, by it he preached, ("The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel," &c. Luke iv. 18.) "through it he offered up himself a sacrifice without spot

to God." Heb. ix. 14. And in the same power runs the vein of the whole dispensation of the gospel; for it is a ministration of the Spirit. 2 Cor. iii. 8. Take away the life, take away the Spirit; ye take away the stones of this building; ye take away the church; ye take away the ministry; ye take away all.

Now about this inward building there was an outward court, which had its being, state, and honor from the presence of the inward life. The virtue of the inward building did cast a reflection, and bring forth an outward state (as it cannot but do, wherever it appears in its riches and glory). This state stood firm in the days of the apostles, till God's measuring and removing of his temple, altar, and worshippers, and his giving up of the outward court (it having lost the life and virtue, which flowed into it from the temple, while the temple remained within it) to the Gentiles; who under the Gospel are such as are uncircumcised in spirit, and can worship in the outward court without the Spirit.

The enemy indeed fought hard against the life and power, but he could not there prevail; the gates of hell could not prevail against the true church, which brought forth the man-child, nor against the man-child whom she brought forth; but the man-child was caught up to God, and the woman fled into the wilderness. Then that church-state, and worship, which depended upon their presence, was dissolved; for how could it be otherwise, when both the man-child, which was the head of the church (from whence the virtue, life, and influence did flow into the whole body), and the woman (or church) herself also were both gone out of sight? So that the ministry of eternal life, and the temple, wherein the life was ministered, being both removed, they are neither of them henceforward to be found in that place, where they were beheld before (and where most eyes would be ready to look for them again), but there where the Spirit had hid them.

Now mark diligently, what kind of esteem the true church hath had in the world ever since her disrobing herself of her outward garments, and flight into the wilderness,

and how her true seed have been handled. The dragon immediately casts a flood after her; her beautiful raiment being put off, and she clothed in the habit of a widow, the eye of the world could no longer see and acknowledge her to be the church, but disdain, reproach, revile her. This is her lot all the days of antichrist; she is misrepresented by the dragon's flood of reproaches, and looked upon as a strumpet, as one that pretends to Christ for her Lord and husband, to his spirit, to his kingdom, to his truth, without a just right; and the remnant of her seed are still made war with by the dragon. Who have been the hunted ones, the hated, the persecuted in all nations, but the tender-conscienced, who receive the law of Christ into their hearts, bowing to him in their worship and conversation, and dare not bow or worship according to the doctrines and commandments of men?

Now the true church, or temple, being thus removed, the outward court becomes the habitation and place of worship among the Gentiles, all the time of the church's abode in the wilderness. The Spirit of the Lord having left it, the Heathenish spirit (man's earthly nature and wisdom), the spirit of antichrist, enters into it, and upholds the form of the former building (so far as it judgeth necessary), and here it is found worshipping, and making a great show of holiness and devotion, but in the mean time makes war with the true worshippers, who cannot worship in the outward court (since the Spirit of the Lord hath left it, and given it to the Gentiles), but follow the church into the wilderness, and worship in that temple which God hath removed thither.

Oh! where is the eye which can read these things, as they are written either in the letter, or in the Spirit. Antichrist is a mystery of iniquity, which works, and gets up, and reigns, under an appearance of godliness; and he that will discern him, and his false ways of worship, must have that eye which sees beyond the appearance of things, into their nature: and in this is the discovery of him, and the redemption from him. And happy is he, who is not "de-

filed with women," but abideth in the true *virginity*, expecting and preparing for the appearance of the bridegroom.

THE CONSIDERATION OF A POSITION &c.

THERE is a position laid down in some printed letters, concerning the use of the Common Prayer-book, tendered by one Edm. Ellis (who professeth himself to be a minister of Jesus Christ) to Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Ford (as he styleth them); against which position he entreateth me, if I find upon my spirit any thing to be objected against it, to discover it in exact and punctual expressions. This desire of his is set down in print after the letters.

His position, or assertion, is this: "That a man may worship God in Spirit and in truth, in the use of that form of prayer for morning and evening, which we call the Common-Prayer."

Now whoever would weigh this assertion aright, must have the balance of the sanctuary, and must put it into the scale with an equal hand; and then looking with that eye, which is given to see the mysteries of the kingdom of God, to him who is born of God, the truth or error of it is easily discerned.

True prayer is the breathing of the child to the Father which begat it, from the sense of its wants, for the supply of those wants.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John iii. 8. God, by the breath of his Spirit, begets a man out of the spirit and likeness of this world into his own

image and likeness. He that is thus begotten, wants nourishment, wants the divine warmth, the breasts of consolation, the clothing of the Spirit, the garment of salvation; wants the bread of life to feed on; wants the water of life to drink; wants strength against the enemy's assaults, wisdom against his snares and temptations; wants the arm of the Deliverer to preserve and carry on the work of redemption daily; wants faith to deny the fleshly wisdom, that so he may trust and feel the virtue of the arm of the Deliverer; wants hope, patience, meekness, a clear guidance, an upright heart to follow after the Lord; yea, very many are the daily wants of that which is begotten by the breath of God, in its state of weakness, until it be drawn up into the unity of the body, where the full communion with the life is felt, the heart satisfied, and the wants drowned.

Now the breathing of this child to the Father from the sense of these wants for his supply; that is prayer; nay, though it be but a groan, or sigh, which cannot be uttered, or expressed; yet that is prayer, true prayer, which hath an acceptance with the Lord, and receiveth a gracious answer from him. And he that begetteth the child, teacheth him to pray, even by the same Spirit which begat him. In watching daily to the Spirit, the child is kept sensible of the will of the Father, and in his light he sees the way wherein he is to walk; he sees also the enemy when he is coming, yea, and the snares he is privily laying, and he feels his own weakness to withstand or escape: and in this sense his heart cries to the Father of spirits for preservation; for him to stand by him; for him to step in in the needful time, even in the season of distress. And thus watching to the Spirit, the life of a Christian is a continual course of prayer: *he prays continually*. This is the living prayer of the living child, which consists not in a form of words, either read out of a book, or conceived in the mind; but in feeling the breath of its nature issuing out from the principle of life in it to the living spring, which is the Father of it; who by causing his virtues to spring up in it, nourisheth it to everlasting life.

But now, man who is not born of the Spirit, but (by conceiving some of the truths of God in the wisdom from below) hath attained to some change of opinion and conversation, he pretends to be this birth from above; though indeed he is born but "of bloods," or "of the will of the flesh," or "of the will of man," John i. 13. and what God begets in, and gives to, his true child, he will be imitating, though he be out of the nature and spirit where the true child is begotten, and where the true gift of the Father is received by him. He will be believing, though he hath not received any proportion of the living faith from the hand of the Father: he will be forming repentance and sorrow for sin, though his heart be not turned from it; he will be hoping in God's mercy, although he be both from off the foundation, and from under the shadow of the mercy-seat; and he will be praying, though he hath neither received the Spirit, nor been taught by the Spirit to pray; and so being from that which should guide him, and teach him the truth and way of worship as it is in Jesus, he runs out into the inventions and imaginations, and sets up a way of his own choosing; which he having much considered of, and beat out by reasonings, and fenced about with arguments, he grows wise in his own eyes, and now verily believes it to be the way of God, and that he is able to maintain it against all opposers. Thus one man, he is for a form; another man, he is against a form, and for conceived prayers; and each thinks himself able to maintain his own, and to overthrow the other. But oh, that that ear were open which can hear the truth! that where there is any true, honest, upright desire after God, from the simplicity of the heart, it might not be thus betrayed through the subtlety of the fleshly wisdom, which lies lurking in the wise, reasoning, knowing part, to betray the poor, weak babe. The natural man, the reasoning man, the understanding man, the wise man according to the natural wisdom, cannot understand the things of God. Here is no learning to pray aright, to believe aright, to hope aright, to mourn aright, to rejoice aright, &c., but this wisdom must be brought to nothing, 1 Cor. i. 19. and a man

must become a child to all knowledge, as let in this way; and he that so becomes a child is taught to pray, to believe, to wait, to hope, and all that is necessary to eternal life.

Now as the Father teacheth to pray, so he giveth desires or words (if he please) according to the present need. Sometimes he gives but ability to sigh or groan (if he give no more, he accepts that). Sometimes he gives strong breathings and plenty of words to pour out the soul in before the Lord. But if a man should catch those words, and lay them up against another time, and offer them up to God in his own will, this would be but will-worship and abomination. This I have known experimentally, and have felt the wrath of God for it. That is prayer, which comes fresh from the Spirit; and that is a true desire, which the Spirit begets; but the affections and sparks of man's kindling please not the Lord, nor do they conduce to the soul's rest, but will end in the bed of sorrow. Isa. l. 11.

Now as touching the Book of Common Prayer, or prayers conceived without the immediate breathings of the Spirit, I shall speak mine own experience faithfully, which is this: I have felt both these ways draw out the wrong part, and keep that alive in me, which the true prayer kills. And he that utters a word beyond the sense which God begets in his spirit, takes God's name in vain, and provokes him to jealousy against his own soul. "God is in heaven, thou art on earth, therefore let thy words be few." The few words which the Spirit speaks, or the few still, soft, gentle breathings which the Spirit begets, are pleasing to God, and profitable to the soul; but the many words which man's wisdom affects, hurt the precious life, and thicken the veil of death over the soul, keeping that part alive which separates from God; which part must die ere the soul can live.

The true prayer is by that which God begets in the virtue of his Spirit, ("praying always in the Spirit," Ephes. vi. 18. Jude 20.) in the time he chooses: for the Spirit breatheth as well when he listeth, as where he listeth; and man cannot limit him when he shall breathe, or when he shall

not breathe; but is to wait the season of his breathing, and so to "watch unto prayer."

Now if the prayer be in words, (for there is a praying without words) then it must be in those words which he pleaseth to give, from the sense which he kindleth, and not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, or would choose to use. And indeed, in the true religion, and in every exercise of it man's wisdom is kept out, and nailed to the cross, by which means the immortal life is raised, and grows in the true disciple. He believes, he hopes, he waits, he prays, he mourns, he rejoices, he obeys, &c., in the cross to the mortal part; not as man's wisdom teacheth, or would teach, or can teach any of these things; for his sacrifice is still an abomination, even to the wise Egyptian part in himself; (O wise man! abase thyself before the Lord in his Spirit, that thou mayest read this and live!) but as the life teacheth, as the wisdom from above teacheth, which breaketh down, shutteth up, confoundeth and destroyeth man's wisdom, while he is teaching his babe.

Thus have I answered in the simplicity of my heart, to the nature of the thing, so far as the Lord hath pleased to draw forth my spirit; and in sinking down to that, which thus opened my spirit, my answer may easily be read and assented to: but to that which is in the disputing wisdom, out of the feeling of the hidden life and virtue, it may prove a mystery.

Afterwards he also entreateth me to peruse seriously, and to lay deeply to heart (in the real fear and dread of the great God), some particulars which he teacheth for truths.

I perceive he is offended at the questioning of his ministry, and that the main intent of his proposing these is to justify his ministry; which if they were true, yet the preaching of them would not prove him, or any man else, to be a minister of Jesus Christ: for it is not preaching things that are true which makes a true minister; but the receiving of his ministry from the Lord. The gospel is the Lord's, which is to be preached, and is to be preached in his power; and the ministers which preach it are to be en-

dued with his power, and to be sent by him. The apostles themselves though they had received instructions concerning the kingdom from Christ's own lips, both in his lifetime, and after his resurrection. Acts. i. 3. and had received a commission from him to teach all nations. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. yet this was not sufficient to make them able ministers of the New Testament; but, before they went abroad to preach, they were to wait for the power; Acts i. 4. 8, and when they had received it, they were to minister in it, that men might be converted to the power, and by the power, that the faith of persons might not stand in the wisdom of their words, (which Paul might have abounded in, as well as others) but in the power of God. 1 Cor. ii. 5. And this was it made Paul minister in fear and trembling, lest the wrong part in him should minister; lest the earthly understanding part should be holding forth the truths of God out of the life, out of the power, and so he should convert men to the wisdom of the words he spake, and not to the power. ver. 2, 3. This was it he was sent for, to turn men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God;" Acts xxvi. 18. from the spirit of enmity and death, to the Spirit of love and life: and this he was careful of in his ministry, that men might not run away with his words, and miss of the thing. And this also was the way whereby he discovered true and false ministers: "I will come, and know (saith he) not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power: for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. Many men might catch their words, and run away with them, and preach them; but they could not minister in the power. Now the kingdom which the gospel ministers are the preachers of, consists not in words, but in power. "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit." 2 Cor. iii. 6. The ministry of the New Testament is a ministry of the Spirit, and it cannot be without the Spirit. It is a reaching to men's consciences "in the demonstration of the Spirit and power," 1 Cor. ii. 4. and 2

Cor. iv. 1, 2. which being felt in the heart, and turned to, this converts them to God.

The ministry of the gospel doth not consist in a bare opening of the letter (or raising of doctrines and uses from the letter, which the wisdom of man may easily perform) as the ministry of the law did: but in bringing men to the feeling of the Spirit, even of the eternal power of God which redeems, in turning men from the darkness to the light, in setting their faces towards the power. The gospel is the substance of what was shadowed out in the law; and he that ministers it must minister substance. He must have the heavenly treasure (that is the substance) in his earthly vessel; 2 Cor. iv. 7. and he must give out of this treasure into the vessel which God prepares: and that he may do this, he must minister in the Spirit, and in the power. His words must not be such as man's wisdom would teach, or as man's comprehension would gather; but such words as God's wisdom prepares for him, and puts into his mouth. He that will be a true minister, must receive both his gift, his ministry, and the exercise of both from the Lord: and must be sure, in his ministering, to keep in the power, or he will never win others to the power: but in keeping in the power, while he is ministering and standing in the cross to his own understanding and wisdom, giving forth the truths which the Lord chooseth to have him speak in the words which God chooseth, even in the words which are ministered to him by the power; in thus ministering he shall save his own soul, and those that hear him, even all who in fear and meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul. For alas, alas! many have received words of truth, and apprehensions of knowledge, whereby they hope to be saved; but how few are acquainted with that knowledge which stands in the power, which alone converts and keeps alive unto God! Oh, how many souls are to be answered for by them, who take upon them to be pastors from God, who have fed the flock with words, *with discourses which they have made*, and have ruled over them with *force and cruelty;* but have wanted the love, the ten-

derness, the light and power of the true Shepherd! Oh, what will these do when God requires his sheep at their hands! Oh, that there were an heart to consider! Ye shepherds of England, little do ye know what is towards you.

Now for those things themselves, which he saith "he principally endeavors to make known to the sons of men," there is a mixture in them; which, if he could singly apply himself to wait on the Lord in the meek, sober spirit, out of the consultations, wisdom, and confidence of the flesh, it might please the Lord to make manifest to him.

The first particular of those, which he lays down for truths is, "that the good things of this life, honors, riches, &c., unless we make use of them in the service of God, are but vanity and vexation of spirit; and in no wise any more capable to satisfy or content an immortal soul, than lime, and ashes, and cobwebs, and such-like trash, are to satisfy and keep in health the bodies of those persons, who, through the depravedness of their appetite, desire to feed on them.

Ans. Christ, by his ministry, calleth his disciples out of the world up to the Father; out of the honor, riches, and whatever else is of the world. "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" John v. 44. And the rich man, he bids him "sell all and follow him." And the Apostle John saith, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John ii. 15, 16. He that will be a disciple of Christ, must travel out of the earthly into the heavenly, leaving all that is of this world behind him, possessing nothing as his portion, but him who hath called him out of this country, from among his kindred, and from his father's house, to another land, kindred, and habitation. So that here they are pilgrims and strangers, sojourners and passengers, unknown to the world, and of a strange garb, behavior, and appearance in it; not enjoy-

ing any thing as the world enjoys; not using any thing as the world useth; not honoring men, or receiving honor from men, as the world gives or receives honor; but honoring men in the Lord, and receiving honor from the Lord: and whatever they seem to retain of the earthly things, they hold as stewards under the Lord; not using or disposing of them, as they think good, but waiting for the discovery of the Master's pleasure, who is to order, in his counsel and wisdom, all that is his own, to his own glory. The law requireth a tenth part to be given up to the Lord; the gospel requireth all, *soul, body, spirit, good name, &c.;* even that the whole possession be sold, and laid at the Master's feet; and he that keepeth any thing back, cannot be a disciple; cannot be a soldier of Christ; but must needs *entangle himself with the affairs of this life.* This is sound and savory, even the truth of Jesus, as it is known and felt in the renewed spirit; but his words, if he measure them in the pure light of God, he will perceive not to have sprung thence; but to have been formed in the earthly wise part; even in that wisdom, understanding, and comprehension, which is shut out of the mysteries of God's kingdom.

For his second, "That nothing but the enjoyment of God, the fountain of all goodness, can truly and really content an immortal soul." And for his third, "That no man can enjoy God, but he that loves him with all his heart, and with all his soul, (and for his sake) his neighbor as himself." I own both the things themselves, and these words, and I felt a good savor in them at the reading of them: only let me say this, if he put men upon striving after these things, without pointing them to the gift where the strength is received to perform, and where the waiting is to be for the strength, he cannot preach them profitably to his hearers.

To his fourth, "That though every sincere convert, or regenerate person, loves God continually with his whole heart, as to the habit or root of holy love; yet whilst he is in the body, he may sometimes fail of the act or fruit of it, and may offend God through the love of the creature. Which truth (so much opposed in these days) is clear and

manifest in the holy Scriptures; particularly in the records of the heinous sins of the prophet David, and Peter, the apostle."

Ans. The Lord *circumciseth the heart* of believers under the new covenant, *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, that they may live: he causeth the plant to spring up out of the dry and barren ground, which he watereth with his blessing; and he layeth his axe to the root of the old tree, hewing at it, even till he hath cut it up: he engrafteth the Eternal Word into the heart, and by it is daily purifying thereof, fulfilling the good pleasure of his goodness therein, and carrying on the work of faith with power:* and the ministry which he gave was for the "perfecting the saints," Eph. iv. 12, 13. which ministry exhorted and encouraged believers (from God's promises of his presence and powerful operation of his Spirit in the hearts of his sons and daughters) to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii. 1. Now that the corrupt tree shall never be cut down whilst man is in the body, that the heart shall never be thoroughly circumcised to love the Lord, but be in danger of "offending God through the love of the creature," this doctrine and belief springeth not from the pure fountain of life and power; but the reasoning part hath gathered it from its conceivings beneath the power.

The seed of God cannot sin (for as he is pure which begetteth, so is that pure which is begotten of him): nor can man sin, who is born of it, and abides in it: and if God please to perfect the birth and the work of circumcision, what can hinder a man from being wholly born from it, and from abiding in it? Indeed a man that strives in his own strength, either against sin, or towards holiness, may well doubt of ever having it accomplished: but he that feels the eternal power beginning the work, and carrying it on daily, cannot doubt but he can perfect it; yea, and is encouraged (by the feeling thereof) to hope and wait on him for the perfecting of it.

As for his instances of David and Peter, they reach not

the thing: for though David and Peter did fall; yet both David and Peter might attain a higher state before they went out of the body, than they were in before they fell. David was a great prophet, and Peter a precious disciple; but yet there was a higher estate to be administered, even the receiving that which the prophets prophesied of, and which the disciple was to wait for. The disciples who had known Christ, and had been taught by him, and had received a commission from him, to whom all power in heaven and earth was given, yet were to wait for a further and higher state, even for receiving "the promise of the Father, the power from on high," that he that was with them might be in them. John xiv. 17. John was as great as any prophet, and yet he that was least in the kingdom was greater than he. Read the Acts of the Apostles. Behold what a precious people was brought forth, even in the biginning of the apostles' ministry; how full of faith, how stripped of the world, how single-hearted to God, and one towards another! Acts ii. 42, &c., and Acts iv. 32, &c. What would these be, abiding and growing up in the vine? The cutting off of sin is necessary while in the body; but to make the committing of sin necessary while in the body, is a great derogation to the power of God's grace, and to the mystery of faith, which overcometh the evils of the heart, and the worldly nature within; purifieth the conscience from dead works, and is "held in the pure conscience." Oh that men knew the power, and the faith which stands in the power! for then would they not judge it so impossible to be cleansed by the faith through the power. Oh, that light, that pure light of the Spirit, wherein the living blood runs, which cleanseth from all sin, and keepeth clean them that abide and walk in it! If this were but a little felt, such doctrines as these (which are gathered in the comprehension from words read, without being let into the thing itself) would soon vanish, and find no place in the heart where the power dwells, nor in the understanding which is renewed, preserved, and fed by the power. For the things of God are to be known and held in the un-

derstanding which is given of God (which understanding is of the Spirit, and is spiritual), and not with the natural understanding, which cannot receive the things of the Spirit, but only a carnal apprehension and sense of the words of the Spirit, according as a man can beat them out with, and comprehend them in, his reasoning part.

To the fifth, "That the souls of the faithful are always growing in grace, whilst they are in the body; and at the instant of death, or separation from the body, our Lord Jesus shall present them to the Father, without spot or blemish."

Ans. Christ presenteth to the Father, when he hath purified the heart and mind, and made it fit for God's pure life and presence. He hath received the fulness from the Father, and hath freely given of his grace and of his truth to the sons of men, to regenerate them, to cleanse and sanctify their hearts, and make them fit for God to dwell in. He sitteth in his temple as "a refiner and purifier of silver," (who is like "a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap") and when he hath purified his disciples, his children, his Levites, he presenteth them to the Lord, for the Lord to tabernacle and dwell in: when he hath thoroughly consecrated them, he presenteth them as kings and priests to his Father, to offer up "an offering in righteousness," and to reign with him in his kingdom. Mal. iii. 3. Rev. i. 5. And there were some so purified by the leaven of the kingdom (which purgeth out the old leaven by degrees, even till at length it hath made the lump wholly new), that to them all things were pure. Titus i. 5. There were some "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. Thus it was before the apostasy; yea, and after the apostasy there were some found standing on "Mount Zion" again, such as had learned the "new song;" such as "were

redeemed from the earth;" such as "were not defiled with women," (with any of the false churches, or their false ways of worship) but had kept their virginity in the wilderness. If ye would know who these were, they were the "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb" after the apostasy, who were thoroughly cleansed by the spirit of burning, insomuch as "in their mouth was found no guile," but "they were without fault before the throne of God." Rev. xiv. 1.—6.

The work of the Spirit of Christ in the heart is an inward work, and doth not consist in outward times or seasons, but in spiritual degrees and seasons; which when they are finished, the heart renewed, the spirit changed, the work wrought out: then the glory of the Father is revealed, the entrance into the everlasting kingdom ministered, and then there is a sitting down in the everlasting mansion, even with Christ in the heavenly places which he hath prepared; where they that are redeemed, and purged, and sanctified, sit together with him: and as the body cannot hinder his entering into the spirits of his saints, and his dwelling in them, no more can it hinder their entering into him and dwelling in him.

Now there are several exercises of spirit, several measures of faith, and several degrees of life and glory. Some are under the clouds, some in the sea; some in Egypt, some in the wilderness; some waiting for his appearance, some in the enjoyment of him already appeared. In some the work of regeneration, of sanctification, of newness of spirit and life is but begun; in others it is interrupted, and they come to a loss; in some it is much carried on, even towards consummation; and some are already "complete in him;" finding fulness of satisfaction in him, (in whom the everlasting springs are opened, to the full content of their hearts) and bring forth fruit to him, to the full content and satisfaction of his heart. In the apostles' days there were those that waited for his coming, and there were those also that knew him come, and had received the good understanding from him, and were "in the eternal life." John v. 20.

Yet this doth not exclude growth, for the fulness is infi-

nite; and though a perfect state may be attained in the perfect gift, yet there is a growth in the perfection (for Christ who was perfect, and in whom was no guile, grew in wisdom, and knowledge, and in favor with God and men). And as God is infinite, so to that which is transplanted into him, there is no end of growth in him: but the tree, which stands in God's holy earth, by his pure river of waters, shall grow for ever and ever into his endless life and fulness.

To his sixth, "That no man can so know God as to love him with all his heart, and with all his soul, but through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and him crucified: who, by those grievous sufferings which he endured when he was upon earth, made satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of all those that believe in his name; so that it is as consistent with the justice, as with the mercy of God, to forgive them their sins, and make them heirs of eternal life. God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Ans. The knowledge of Christ is life eternal, and in his cross is the spiritual virtue, which cuts off the uncircumcision of the heart, whereby it is enabled to love the Lord. Now "Christ is the Lord from heaven, the quickening Spirit," who soweth the seed of the kingdom in the heart, and causeth it to spring up; out of which seed the faith, the love, the hope, the meekness, the patience, and every spiritual fruit springs and grows. And he that is thus born of this seed, and receives the knowledge of life which springs from this seed, he cannot but love him which begat him, and he reapeth the fruit of all that Christ did and suffered in that prepared body; and God is both just, and the justifier of him who is thus united to Jesus. But that man who knoweth not this faith nor is acquainted with the love which springeth from this root, and which is of this divine nature, but thinketh to be justified by applying to himself what is related in the histories concerning Christ; this man deceives his soul, and misseth of the true justification; for God is just, who hath made the promise sure to the seed, and hath shut out man, further than he is born of the seed, and found in the seed. But he who abideth in the seed, and in whom the

seed findeth pleasure and abideth; he cannot miss of the promise, of the everlasting righteousness, the reconciliation, the peace, the joy, and whatever else God giveth to the seed.

To his seventh and last, "That the ready way to receive Christ, the only light, by which we may see the way to heaven; or so to believe in him that we may be saved by him; is to forsake all that we have, that we may be his disciples: that is to say, to take off our affections from things on the earth, and to set them on things above, where Jesus sitteth on the right hand of God; putting our trust and confidence in the free and in the infinite mercy of God, through Christ; to be guided by him in all our ways, to be led by his good Spirit in all those ways of grace and holiness, through which we must pass before we can attain to glory."

Ans. To know Christ as the light eternal (as he was yesterday, is to-day, and will be for ever); to trust this light in its convictions, calls, and free openings of love, to feel its living virtue, and in that virtue to give up all that is of the earthly nature and spirit; to sell all for the everlasting inheritance; this is indeed the way to life. But it is not the doing of things which is of value; for man may imitate and strive to do much, and may go a great way *in forsaking all, and in taking off his affections from things* (inasmuch as he may give all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet it profit him nothing); but it is the doing of things in the virtue, in the life, in the power which comes from Christ, which is of acceptance with God, and of advantage to the soul. Every motion and operation of true life springs from the root of life, and hath the virtue of the root in it; and that which differenceth it from all mens' imitations, and from all the liknesses which the earthly spirit can frame, is the nature and virtue of the root being found in it. Therefore he that will be a true Christian, must eye Christ, the spring of his life, and keep in the feeling of his living virtue, and in that offer up all his sacrifices of faith, love, and obedience to God; and he that will be

a true minister, must wait upon the power himself, to be an instrument (in the hand of power) to direct men to this, and to preserve and build them up therein.

But alas! this is the stone which the wise builders have all along refused! The builders before the coming of Christ, they got a knowledge concerning the Messiah to come; but being unacquainted with the thing itself, rejected both it at its coming, and also the vessel wherein it appeared. And the builders, all along the apostasy, got a knowledge of Christ come, and preached believing in him crucified, as the way to life; but the living stone, the living thing itself, which is both the foundation, the corner stone, and the top stone of the building, they have been ignorant of, and ready to persecute every appearance of it. Christ can no more now appear in Spirit, than formerly he could in that prepared body of flesh, but the wise builders now are as ready to cry out against him for a blasphemer, a profaner of God's ordinances, a deceiver of the people (yea, a witch, or one that hath a devil), as the wise builders then were. "But wisdom" in all ages "is justified by her children," and of none else. He that is born of the wisdom, he can discern the womb, and own the fruit and branchings forth thereof under the mean, dark veil, whereby it hides itself from all the fleshly-wise of every age. "The kingdom of God cometh not by observation;" the wisest Scribes and Pharisees could not know it by all the observations which they could gather out of Moses' and the prophets' writings; nor can any now know it by any observations they can gather out of the apostles' writings; but by being born of that Spirit whereof they were born, and by being formed in that womb wherein they were formed, by this means alone is the thing come to be known which they knew. He that receiveth the same eye, seeth the same thing, according to his measure; and coming to the life, wherein they received the truth; the words which they spake concerning the truth are easy. Thus as they were written in the Spirit, so are they there alone truly read; and being so read, they become exceeding profitable to that which so reads them; but man

guessing and imagining and reasoning in his carnal wisdom concerning the things of God, and so gathering senses and meanings about the words and expressions of scripture, doth but build up a Babel, which the eternal life and power will throw down (whenever he appears) with that which built it. Oh that men were wise to wait for the discovery of the true rock, and of the true builder upon that rock! that that city and building might be raised in them, which God alone can rear; that they might not be left desolate and miserable in that stormy day, which will shake all buildings and foundations and rocks, but our Rock; wherein all professors, and preachers, and high notionists, and whatever sort else can be named (who have stumbled at God's living truth, and at the pure appearance of his redeeming power, which, in this age, hath mightily broken forth, after the long, dark night of apostasy, to the sight of every eye which is opened in the Spirit), shall confess with tears, sorrow, anguish, and shame, that *their rock is not as our rock, they themselves being judges.* For though all sorts of professors generally own Christ as the rock in words, yet most miss of the thing; and the subtle enemy hath made use of a notion, or apprehension of the thing in the carnal mind, to deceive them of the thing, to keep them from feeling the eternal virtue, the living power of life in the heart, which is the arm of God's salvation, whereby Christ draws man's lost soul and spirit out of the grave of sin and corruption, up to the Father. But oh, how are poor hearts deceived! who think, by a believing of what Christ did, of a satisfaction he made for them while he was here on earth, though they lie in the pit all their days, though they carry the body of sin about with them to the very last of their time here in the body, and have not felt the arm of God's power breaking down their spiritual enemies, their lusts, their corruptions, and redeeming them from them; yet hope to be saved in the end, and to be presented without spot or wrinkle to God! Christ had the name Jesus given him, because he was to save his people from their sins; and no man can truly and livingly know the name Jesus, further than he feels the saving virtue of

it; but he that effectually feels the virtue, he indeed knows the name, and can bow at the name, feeling his lusts and enemies bowed under by the power thereof, and that raised up in him, which can worship the Father in the Spirit and in the truth. Oh that the sons of men knew; oh that the teachers and professors of this age knew, what they have so long reviled and trampled upon! Surely they would mourn bitterly, kiss the Son, and escape the wrath.

Now, if the Lord please to smite any one's earthly wisdom and comprehension (which is the main thing which stands in the way of the pure openings and revelations of the life), and give him the feeling of any thing here written, let him in fear acknowledge the Lord, sacrificing to his goodness, and waiting upon him to be kept in that feeling, not magnifying or vilifying any of his instruments; but in meekness and humility embracing the instructions of the Almighty, from the hand which he pleaseth to give them forth by. As for me, I am but a shell; and if this party knew me (who sets me up so high, preferring me above many, whom the Lord hath preferred far above me), he would soon acknowledge me to be a poor, weak, contemptible one; yet this I must by no means deny, that the pure liquor of the eternal life, at its pleasure springeth up and issueth out through me; though I can also, in true understanding, say, that it issueth out far oftener, and much more abundantly through others. Let it have its honor, wherever it appears! and the Lord bring down that in people's hearts, which hindereth the owning and receiving of its virtue.

A WARNING OF TENDER BOWELS, TO THE RULERS, TEACHERS, AND PEOPLE OF THIS NATION, CONCERNING THEIR CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

THAT there was a fight between the dragon and his angels, and Michael and his angels, concerning the New-Testament church and ministry, is manifest even from the letter of the Scriptures. Rev. xii.

That the dragon and his angels, though they could not get the better, as relating to the power, yet that they did get the better, as relating to the form, insomuch as that they overcame the third part of the true ministers, and drew them from their standing in the firmament of God's power, off to their earthly ministry; and that the church herself also was fain to fly into the wilderness, from the face of the dragon, for her safety and preservation, where she was to be nourished and fed by God all the time of antichrist's reign; this likewise is not only revealed in the Spirit, but is also manifest from the letter. Rev. xii.

That after this flight of the true church, and overcoming of the true ministry, the dragon erected his false church and ministry (which had but at best the form without the power) over all nations, peoples, multitudes, and tongues; this is also as evident, to them that read the prophecies of the Revelations in the light of that Spirit that wrote them. Is not the false woman (after the true woman was fled) manifestly described? Rev. xvii. which hath a bewitching cup of fornications. ver. 2. 4. Mark, she hath not the true "cup of blessing," her cup is not filled with the "wine of the kingdom," it is not the cup of the true spouse (which keeps chaste and loyal to the bed of the husband), but the cup of fornications, wherein is a form of doctrine and discipline and order and church-government, which leads from the life, which bewitches from the power, which lulls asleep in a form of profession and worship of Christ, without knowl-

edge of, guidance by, and subjection to, his Spirit. And this is the government, ministry, and way of antichrist, wherever it is found; how curiously soever the cup be gilded, yet it is but the cup of fornication, which bewitcheth the heart with its golden appearance, and then leads it into adultery from the life. And the dragon doth not only set up a false church over the nations (in many parts whereof the truth had before appeared), Rev. xvii. 15. but a false ministry also. There is a false prophet (which deceiveth with miracles and false appearances of truth) advanced in this corrupt state; which false prophet continues and upholds his deceit over the nations, till the mighty appearance of Christ, in Spirit and power, doth judge him. Rev. xix. 20. 2 Thess. ii. 8. There is a beast with "horns like a lamb," who "doth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth," &c. Rev. xiii. 13, 14. Insomuch that he draws the kings and inhabiters of the earth (in a mystery of deceit) into the bed of whoredom and false worship, instead of the pure way of life, and pure worship of the living God, in his Spirit, and in his truth. Rev. xvii. 2.

Is it not further manifest, that this false church and false ministry, set up in the world by the power of the dragon, persecuted God's witnesses to the truth, in all the ages of antichrist's reign? So soon as ever the church was fled into the wilderness, the dragon forthwith went to "make war with the remnant of her seed, which kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. xii. 17. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear." Rev. xiii. 7, 8, 9. "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not

worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Rev. xiii. 15, 16, 17. Yea, "the woman" (the false church, which the dragon had set up, by his power in the nations, instead of the true) "was drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Rev. xvii. 6. Oh the misery, and lamentable hard usage of the witnesses of Jesus, who have been true lambs! born of the power, faithful to the power, witnessing against every form and appearance of religion, doctrine, and worship, which hath appeared without the power, even in the days of greatest profession and highest devotion under the apostasy from the power; how have these been hunted, persecuted, devoured by the wolves in the sheep's clothing, who had got the outside, the garment, the name of Christ and Christianity, the profession of church, ministry, and ordinances, but have wanted the life, the virtue, the thing itself; and so have turned against it, and kept it down, that they might keep up their form! For let but the power appear, the form without the power is soon detected to be what it is. And this is properly antichrist and antichristianism; to wit, not openly to appear in a direct denial of Christ, his truths, and worship, but to set up a way of knowledge and worship without his Spirit. Another spirit creeping into the form, that is antichrist (and the setting up observation and practice of the form out of the life and power, that is antichristianism), and this is the persecutor, destroyer, and devourer about religion.

Now though the Lord hath suffered this false church and false prophet to reign long in the dragon's power, and to revile and worry his poor lambs, in every age of antichrist's reign; yet the Lord hath appointed a season to judge this false church, Rev. xvii. 1. to cast the false prophet into the lake. Rev. xix 20. Yea, and to torment with fire and brimstone, all the false worshippers. Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.

Oh, how deeply doth it concern England! her rulers, her teachers, yea, the whole people thereof, to consider their ways, to consider their worship, to consider their church-state, to consider their ministry, that they be not overwhelmed at unawares in the bitter wrath of the Almighty, before which there is no standing. Oh! that they could mourn, and pray, and wait for the eye of God's Spirit; for his pure light, which searcheth and discovereth all the deceits of antichrist; that they might not be bewitched with any of the wine of the fornication of the false woman, "whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands," to entangle her lovers in, and keep them from the pure bed of life, where the Father of life, with the Son and Spirit, is enjoyed and worshipped.

If men consult concerning these things in the wisdom of the flesh, they will be entangled, and err; for that eye cannot see the mysteries of the kingdom, or the course either of truth or deceit. The gospel, the eternal truth, the true church, the true ministry, are all spiritual, (not new shadows, as the things under the ministration of the law were, but spirit and substance) and they can only be seen by the spiritual eye of the children of wisdom. The wise hunters, and diligent inquirers, into the comprehending part, cannot find the womb or the way of life, or the way of the worship of that which is begotten in the life, or God's way of ministry, which he hath appointed for the feeding and preserving of the life. The prophets of old could not be known, discerned, or owned, by the fleshly eye of observation in Israel after the flesh (but they still rejected them, esteeming and magnifying the false prophets above them); how much less can the prophets and ministers of the New-Testament be seen by man's eye? Are they the prophets and ministers of Christ, which a nation cries up for such, and which the eye of the wise men therein admires, and pitches upon? Or, are those they which the renewed eye, in the light of the Lord, sees to be fitted, sanctified, and called forth by Christ into that service? Ah, poor England! must thou fall into the pit before thine eyes be opened!

The great controversy of this age is about church and ministry, which must carry it, the form or the power? Whether the church and ministry shall take place which was before the apostasy, or that which hath sprung up in or since the apostasy? Whether man's wisdom shall determine which is the true church, and its true ministry, or whether the Spirit of God shall determine it? Whether a nation, with the ministers it sets up, shall be the church and ministry? Or whether God's holy nation, (which he calleth and sanctifieth by his Spirit) and the ministers which he chooseth, and sendeth to gather and build up his in the holy faith, and pure power of life, shall be the church and ministry? Our eyes wait on the Lord to see this controversy determined, and our hope of help is in his arm; nor are we at all affrighted at the rising of any strength against us, (our hearts being given up to God's truth, and to suffer for its testimony, according to God's will, meekly and patiently in his strength) but we pity this poor land; yea, in the depth of bowels we pity the rulers, the teachers, and people therein. Oh! that they might be humbled, and in fear of the great God, surrender to him his due, before he appear in his strength to force it from them.

Of the Kingdom, Laws, and Government of Christ in the Heart and Conscience, its Inoffensiveness to all just Laws and Governments of the Kingdoms of Men.

Christ's kingdom, God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven (for they are all one and the same), is that seed of eternal life which God hath hid in the hearts of the sons of men, whereby he gathereth them back unto himself, bringeth them under the yoke of his government, ruleth over them, and reigneth in them.

This kingdom is likened to a grain of mustard-seed, for

its smallness; to a pearl, for its riches, value, and worth; and to leaven, for its spreading nature. And many other parables did Christ make use of to discover it by: as to a piece of silver, which the woman that lost it, lighting the candle, sweeping the house, and searching it diligently, at length found it, even there where she had lost it.

Man fallen from God, is become lost as to the Lord, and as to his own happiness in the Lord: being driven from his blessed presence and divine image, life, and spirit, into the earthly spirit, image, and life, which he chose: yet, in this earth, in this field of the world, God hath hid somewhat, even the everlasting pearl; which, when man is awakened to seek, and findeth in the living breath, in the eternal light of life, it is able to redeem him; it is able to overspread (he becoming subject to the laws, leadings, teachings, and power of it) and leaven him into the likeness and image of the pure life and spirit.

Oh that men knew the gift of God! Oh that men knew the purchase of the blood of Christ! Oh that men knew that spiritual good thing, which Christ (who died for them) hath given to redeem them by! that in that they might be united to Christ, and so by him be renewed and restored to God. For as the Father receiveth none but through the Son, so the Son receiveth none but in that gift which he bestoweth from the Father. He owneth no faith, no love, no hope, no repentance, no obedience, but what springeth from that, and standeth in that.

Now as man is born of this, is leavened by this (as he becomes a fool in his own earthly wisdom and excellency of the fallen spirit, and becomes a babe, a child, a simple innocent, &c.), so he enters into the kingdom, being ingrafted into the root, through the virtue of this which is given him from the root, and so grows up in this, and this in him. And here is the new nature, the new life, the new heart, the new spirit, in which the unity and fellowship with God is again known, and the disunion with the world, the wisdom, the interests, the fashions, the customs, the fears, the hopes, the delights, the joys of this world, and whatever

else is of it. For Christ, as he is not of the world, so he calleth men out of the world; and they which follow him, and become his disciples, go out of the world after him; that is, travel in spirit and conversation from what is of the earth, from whatever is "not of the Father, but of the world. They are not of the world, as I am not of the world, (saith Christ concerning his disciples, John xvii.) therefore the world hateth them.

The laws of this kingdom are given forth in the kingdom, from the covenant of life, which is made there in Christ. They are written in the heart, in the mind, as far as it is renewed. There the fear is put, there the eternal wisdom is opened, there is Zion known, and the Jerusalem which is from above, and the laws of eternal life issue fresh from it, and are revealed by the life in the heart which is turned towards the life. There sin is reproved, and everlasting righteousness manifested in the light which cannot deceive; and as the heart is made subject under the yoke, so sin is wrought out, and righteousness brought in; and under the cross or yoke of life the blood of the everlasting covenant runs through the vessel, to keep it pure, sweet, clean, and fresh in the life.

This then is the government of Christ, to be subject to his Spirit, which appears, and opens his will, in the gift of grace which comes from him; to feel his living breath, by which the heart is begotten to God, out of the region of darkness; to know the movings, the stirrings, the leadings, the steps of the Lamb, who is "the Captain of our salvation;" and to follow him wherever he goes, doing all things that he commands, forbearing all things that he forbids, "without murmuring, without disputing."

Whoever will be of the inward Israel, the spiritual Israel, which Christ redeems out of the spiritual Egypt, and leads through the spiritual wilderness into the land of rest, must know his leader, must receive his Spirit, and follow it faithfully. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" he is none of the spiritual Israel; and if any man follow not the Spirit of Christ through all the travels in the

wilderness, (but either sits down by the way, or lies overcome by any kind of enemies, and comes not to the end of his journey, finishing the warfare and fight of faith) he falls short of the rest. Oh! that men were awakened to consider of things as indeed they are! For religion is not such an outward form of doctrine, or worship of any sort, as men generally (whose poor souls are deceived through the subtlety of the powers of darkness) are too apt and willing to apprehend; but it consists in Spirit, in power, in virtue, in life: not in the oldness of any form that passeth away; but in the newness of the Spirit, which abideth for ever; in being born of the Spirit, in abiding in the Spirit, in living, walking, and worshipping in the Spirit; yea, in becoming and growing into Spirit, and into eternal life: for "that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." Oh! that the sons of men would hearken, that they might taste of the sweetness and riches of the goodness which the Father in his free love hath opened in the spirits of many, and hath let the spirits of many into! Oh! that men would suffer the wearing out of this earthly spirit and wisdom, that they might become like God, be formed into, and live in his image! How long shall the destroyer in every age prejudice men against them in that age which seek their good with their hearts? How long will the world stand in enmity against the generation of God's choice, and provoke the Lord to wrath against them! Surely the spirit of this world will try it out to the very last against the Spirit of God! For indeed the spirit of this world is not subject to the Spirit of God, nor indeed can be, and so cannot endure the government of his kingdom (which is not of this world) to be set up in the sight of it.

Yet the government of Christ and his kingdom is not opposite to any just government of a nation or people. Christ's government is a righteous government of the heart, or inner man, chiefly; which doth not oppose a righteous government of the outward man. Nay, those who are Christ's subjects, and singly obedient to his law of righteousness in their spirits, are more faithful to men, and more subject to

any just law of government, than others can be: for their fidelity and subjection is out of love, and for conscience' sake. But this is it which offends the world; men many times make laws in their own will, and according to their own wisdom (now the wisdom of the world is corrupt, and hath erred from the guidance of God), and are not free from self-ends and interests, not being gathered into that which cleanseth and keepeth pure the naturals. Now that which is of God cannot bow to any thing which is corrupt in man: it can lie down and suffer, and bear the plowing of long and deep furrows upon its back; but it cannot act that which is against its life. It cannot be disloyal to its King, to gratify the spirit of this world; but what practice or testimony its King calls for against the evil and corruption of this world, it must obey singly and faithfully.

God, in every age, so bringeth forth and ordereth his innocent lambs and people, as that they are still offensive to the present age. The Lord fitteth them, and calleth them forth to be witnesses against the evils of the present age: how can they but offend it? Can darkness choose but hate the light, which speaks against it? How can darkness in power and dominion bear to be reproved by a mean, contemptible appearance of the light, in mean and contemptible vessels? For God chooseth "the weak and foolish things of this world, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are." Look into former ages; how did God reprove the kings and princes of Israel? Not by the eminent priests and prophets, whom they expected to be taught by, but by herdsmen, by plowmen, by prophets which they despised. How did he overcome the heathenish world, yea, and the Jewish corrupted state? Was it by wise learned men (by the learned Scribes and Pharisees among the Jews, or by the wise Grecians among the heathen), or by fishermen and publicans? And how shall the recovery out of the apostasy, and the reproof of the antichristian world be? Shall it be by wise synods and counsels of learned and orthodox men among them (as they speak), or shall it be by the learning of the Spirit, which such as these contemn? When

God hath the rich treasure of the knowledge of his kingdom to manifest in the world, he chooses earthen vessels, weak vessels, poor contemptible persons: he appears there (where the eye of man least looks for him) that "the excellency of the power" might appear to be of him wholly, and that the vessel might rob him of none of the glory of it. Now the Lord hath not only chosen, in this day of his great appearance in Spirit to the spirits of his people, mean instruments, but mean things also, foolish things, weak things, the keeping on of an hat, the use of ordinary language, the appearing in mean habits, and despised gestures; yea, and in a foolish way of preaching (indeed it is so to that which hath not the savor of the virtue and power of the life in it); and how can the wisdom of man but stumble at it? Who would think that God should require such things, or appear in such things? O living eternal power! how is thy mighty presence and appearance veiled from all that look for it in any way of man's observation, or judge it with the eye of man's wisdom! *Verily thou art a God that hast hid thyself from the earthly spirit in its utmost wisdom; yea, in its utmost search after the knowledge of, and in the midst of, the highest profession of religion!* Which of the wise, which of the scribes in this age, can discern any of the paths, or so much as one of thy footsteps? Oh that men would fear before the Lord, and be sure to govern in that which is of God, and then they should harm none of his, nor hazard the shaking of their government! but whatever is not of God, both within and without, must fall in the day of God's power. Oh, happy is he who is now made willing to part with that which God is determined to rend from man, that his standing may be in that which cannot be shaken! for there hath been a great earthquake in this nation, both of things without, and of things within; and there yet remains somewhat to be shaken, both without and within, that the glory of God may have room to appear. O England! "kiss the Son, lest he be angry:" let all such laws and customs as are not of him fall before him; and whatever is of him, let it bow unto him, (both within and with-

out) that his wrath break not forth like a fire, which none can quench; for the Lord hath mighty things to bring to pass, and he hath a mighty arm of power to effect them by, and what shall be able to stand before him that stands in his way?

AN

ANSWER

TO THAT

COMMON OBJECTION AGAINST THE QUAKERS,

THAT THEY CONDEMN ALL BUT THEMSELVES.

WITH A LOVING AND FAITHFUL ADVERTISEMENT TO THE NATION, AND POWERS THEREOF.

OBJECTION.

It is commonly objected against us, That we condemn all but ourselves; all the Protestant churches, martyrs, and worthies formerly (many of whom were valiant champions against Rome, and divers of them sealed their testimony with their blood), *and all sorts of Christians and professors at present, who are not just of our stamp and way, though otherwise ever so zealous.*

ANSWER.

THE Protestant churches, (as they are called in way of distinction from the church of Rome) the blessed martyrs, who suffered for the testimony of a pure conscience towards God, and all the worthies of the Lord in their several gen-

erations, who fought against the scarlet whore, were accepted of God in their testimony against her, and are not disowned by us, but dearly owned and honored therein; and for agreeing with them in their testimony in several things, as against deriving of a ministry from Rome (which Luther wrote against, and John Huss prophesied of another ministry to arise), and against maintaining the gospel ministry by tithes, or any other way of forced maintenance, which (till Popery grew very strong and powerful) was known to have been free; and against swearing, &c. (Walter Brute said, "The perfection of Christian men is not to swear at all, because they are so commanded of Christ; whose commandment must in no case be broken, although that the city of Rome is contrary to this doctrine of Christ." Fox's Acts and Monuments. p. 460, 461. And see also p. 495, "Thorp's Testimony both about Tithes and Swearing.") For these very things, and such like, (as for following of Christ, in not receiving or giving that honor which is out of the faith, and for testifying against the hypocrisies and corruptions of our age) do we suffer in this our day, even as they did in their day, from the same spirit that persecuted them; which, though it hath much changed its form and way of appearance, yet still retaineth the same nature.

But all things were not discovered at once. The times were then dark, and the light small; yet they being faithful according to what was discovered, were precious in the Lord's eyes; and what through ignorance they erred in, the Lord winked at and overlooked, being pleased with that sincerity and simplicity of heart which he had stirred up in them towards himself. But if they were now alive in these our days, and should depart from the sincerity which was then in them, and oppose the light of this age, they would not then be accepted of the Lord, but their former sincerity would be forgotten. For the light shineth more and more towards the perfect day: and it is not the owning of the Light as it shone in the foregoing ages, which will now commend any man to God, but the knowing and subjecting to the Light of the present age. Even as in these our days;

there was, some years ago, an honest zeal and true simplicity stirring in the Puritans (especially among the Nonconformists of them), which was of the Lord, and was very dear to him; and had the generations of this age abode there, they would have been able to have followed the Lord in every further step, and leading of his Spirit: but departing from that into some form or other, the true simplicity withered, and another thing began to live in them: and so they settled upon their lees, magnifying the form they had chose to themselves, till at length their hearts became hardened from the pure fear, even to the contracting of a spirit of profaneness; insomuch as they could mock at the next remove and discovery of the Spirit, as some new light; and so by degrees have grown persecutors of that Spirit in its outgoings in the people of the Lord, which they themselves had once some taste of, while they were reproached for Puritans. And the god of this world, who at first tempted them aside into the form, hath at length prevailed so far to blind them therewith, that they can neither see what spirit they themselves are of, nor what Spirit it is they persecute.

Let therefore people consider the truth of the thing, as it is before the Lord: we do not cast dirt upon any in whom the truth of God hath stirred and appeared in any measure in former ages, or in this our age; but this we testify against; to wit, the setting up of any form without the life: for it is the erring spirit that still crieth up the form, to keep down the power, by the form, and so by the help of it to bewitch from the Spirit wherein is the life, and not in the form. This was the painted Jezebel of the apostles' age: false teachers finely dressed up themselves with the form of godliness, and then under this cover they could deny the power, and make head against it. 2 Tim. iii. 5. How easy is it for them to appear in the form of the doctrines of the gospel, in the form of zeal, in the form of holiness, to pass in a nation for the true church; and then to asperse them for heretics, who, appearing in the power, cannot but deny that form which is without the power. This is the great witch of this age (even that spirit of zeal and devotion

which is best clothed and decked with the form without the power), which though men (who judge of the things of God after the flesh) justify, admire, and much contend for in her several shapes and dresses (some being for one, some for another), yet the Lord is searching after her, and will find her out with his eternal flames, which will make her manifest, and all her lovers shall dread her burning and bed of torment. Now, as all along the apostasy, this bewitching spirit (this spirit which bewitcheth from the power), hath crept up under a form of church worship and holiness; so the other Spirit (the pure Spirit of life, the Spirit of true zeal and fear of the Lord), hath still appeared more and more out of the forms. Who were the best preachers, and most eminent Christians in the Puritan days? Were they not those who least minded the form then; nay, indeed, who were most against the form, and persecuted for their conscientious stumbling at it? And who were the greatest persecutors then, but they who were most zealous for the form, both of the government and worship of the church of England? And where is the persecuting spirit next to be looked for, but in the forms which should next appear? And where likewise is the appearance of the true Spirit next to be looked for, but in those whom the Lord should raise up to testify against those forms, and to be the succeeding sufferers for their testimony, as the Puritans had been foregoing sufferers for their testimony.

Yet if there be any persons left, among any of the forms which have appeared (whether former or latter), that have not lost their sincerity and true zeal towards God, them we own and have unity with, so far as they keep, or rather are kept, thereto. If there be any among the Episcopal sort that in truth of heart desire to fear the Lord, and look upon the Common-Prayer-Book as an acceptable way of worshipping him, we pity their blindness, yet are tender towards them, and would not have the simplicity persecuted in them because of this, but rather cherished. If there be any among the Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Seekers, or any other sort, that in truth of heart wait upon the

Lord in those ways, and do not find a deadness overgrown them, but a pure, fresh, lively zeal towards God, with an unfeigned love to his people, our hearts are one with this; and we cannot fight against this good thing in any of them, though in love to them we testify, that their form and way of worship is their present loss and hindrance; yet we doubt not but that the Lord (in his time) will make manifest to such the light of this age; which is the very thing the people of God, in many foregoing ages, have been praying for. But this is our lamentation, that forms and ways of worship abound; but the Puritan principle, the Puritan spirit, is lost and drowned in them all; and that men are hardened against our testimony, not from the remainders of the simplicity in them, but because they are erred from the simplicity, and fallen in league with another spirit, which hath lain lurking in forms of knowledge and worship (to tempt aside from the simplicity, and to hide the sight of the life and power from the panting soul) all this night of the apostasy.

Now mark how easy and natural it is to that spirit to enter into a form, to cry up a form, to set up a form in a nation, city, or country; doubtless it had been done in this nation long ago, had not the mighty hand of the Lord withstood it. When the evil and unclean spirit is detected and driven out of one form, if it doth not get another suddenly to appear in, and tempt with, it must needs loose many of its subjects. The strumpet, or false church, is forced (as God discovers her nakedness and lewdness) to change her dresses and appearances, to new trick and adorn her bed: and then, as if she also were changed, and were now no longer the same, she comes forth again with boldness, and tempteth the young man again to come in unto her. Prov. vii. 16. And thus "she casteth down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her." ver. 26. Who otherwise would have "pondered the path of life," chap. v. 6. had they not been ensnared by her flatteries, who "forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God." chap. ii. 17. There is no more certain and ready

way to suppress truth, and to betray the honesty which is singly searching after it, than to present a form of godliness or worship, as the proper way of meeting with it: for hereby the soul is lulled asleep with a false hope, until the freshness of its desire begins to die, and its life to wither; and then the fleshly part easily grows into unity with, and zeal for, that form which indeed is of the flesh; though it appeared and tempted as if it had been otherwise. And how many have gone a great way towards hell, and have been deeply entangled and distressed in the chambers of death, by entering into this strumpet's church or house, which they then (through the subtlety of her deceit) took for the house or church of God! Prov. vii. 27. Consider the thing a little seriously. When the evil spirit is driven out of his strong-hold of gross Popery, whither should he run but into Episcopacy? When he is driven out of Episcopacy, whither should he run but into Presbytery? When he is driven out of Presbytery, whither should he run but into Independency? When he is driven out of Independency, whither should he run but into Anabaptism? When he is driven out of Anabaptism, whither should he run but into a Way of Seeking? And what is his end of running into Episcopacy, but to save alive that spirit which was hunted out of Popery, and could abide no longer there, and so the better (and the safer from being discerned) to reproach and persecute the other Spirit (wherever it appeared) under the nick-names of Puritans, Separatists, Brownists, Round-heads, &c. And what is his end afterwards of running into Presbytery, but to save that alive which was hunted out of Episcopacy, and to persecute the former truly zealous Spirit (where it should further appear afterwards) by means of that form? Thus the forms and appearances of things change; but the fight is still the same, the evil spirit still getting uppermost, under a form of godliness, and from thence shooting forth its arrows at those that seek after purity of heart, and cannot but testify against those forms where the impure one lodgeth.

This then is the sum of our answer in this respect; we

are not against the true life and power of godliness, wherever it hath appeared, or yet appears under the veil of any form whatsoever. Nay, all persons who singly wait upon the Lord in the simplicity and sincerity of their hearts, whether under any form, or out of forms, (that matters little to us) are very dear unto us in the Lord. But we are against all forms, images, imitations, and appearances, which betray the simplicity and sincerity of the heart, keep the life in bondage, and endanger the loss of the soul. And too many such now there are, which hold the immortal seed of life in captivity under death, over which we cannot but mourn, and wait for its breaking off the chains, and its rising out of all its graves into its own pure life, power, and fulness of liberty in the Lord.

A loving and faithful Advertisement to the Nation, and Powers thereof.

O King! O parliament! O nation of England! consider before the decree come forth; before the ruin of the nation (with the powers thereof) be irrevocably sealed: for the Lord hath a controversy with this nation, and he will plead with thee, O England! who desirest not, and canst not bear a government in righteousness, for the suppressing of the evil, and encouragement of the good; but the good is still suppressed in thee, and cannot grow as it ought, because of the lust of the nation against the purity of the life of God, and because of the corrupt wills, ends, and interests of those who still are in power.

After King Henry the VIIIth had renounced and shaken off in part the Pope's authority in this nation, he did not let it fall to the ground as an evil thing, but took upon himself the exercise of it, assuming to himself the headship and government under Christ in all ecclesiastical causes and matters in his dominions. The same course his successors followed, keeping the very title which the Pope gave to him

of Defender of the Faith. And so parliaments in their days (as if the government of the church were a right and privilege of the nation, and not peculiar to Christ) have taken upon them to make laws and orders about the government of the church and people of God in spiritual things, as well as about matters of state.

Now it would fairly and honestly (with the spirit of meekness, and in the fear of the Lord) be inquired into, *Whether the Pope's power and authority in this nation was a true church-power and authority.* That is, whether it was such a church-power and authority as Christ had instituted; or of another nature, even of a nature contrary to Christ, and to his inward government in the spirits of his people. For if the Pope's power and authority was a true church-power and authority, then it may be lawful in another hand, though not in the Pope's; but if it was a usurped kind of authority and government in itself, then it cannot be lawful in itself, nor serviceable to Christ in any other hand; but will prove an instrument of war against him, in whose hands soever it be put. And let it be singly considered, whether the church power in this nation hath not been a curb to the rising of the purity of religion, even a sharp check upon the tender conscience; but such as the loose (yea, profane spirit) would take pleasure in and contend for.

The true church-power is only the power of the Spirit of Christ. That converts men to God, and that alone is able to govern them in the affairs of his kingdom, being converted. Man, meddling with religion and church-government in his wisdom, is but a beast, and must govern like a beast; namely, with force and cruelty over the spirit and conscience which is tender towards God. As the Lord God of heaven and earth never gave the converting power to any, so neither did he ever give this governing power to any, further than as they were endued with the Spirit; for that is the sceptre of his church and kingdom, which is a sceptre of righteousness, which leads on in the love and gentleness of the Spirit that which is to be dealt gently with, and spiritually cuts off, by its severity and sharpness,

that which is to be cut off. And here are Christ's limits of government, which that spirit and wisdom which exceeds, errs, and does hurt both to itself and others.

Now if, in the mist of darkness, which hath long overspread the earth (for though there broke out a little light to discover the thick blackness of Popery, and to cause some reformation out of it, yet the mist was not expelled), this nation hath erred, her princes, her teachers, her parliaments, and all sorts of persons, in laying hold on and establishing a wrong church-power, which power hath had a bad effect; namely, in suppressing the progress of the reforming spirit, and raising up a formal spirit, if not a spirit of looseness and profaneness, which ran backwards towards Popery, and not forwards from it: yet let them not love error, and so strive against the light which shineth forth to discover the error to them; but let them humble themselves before Christ, the Lord of all, and restore unto him that which is his due, lest they provoke him to wrath, and cause him to take from them what they look upon as their due. For is it not just with Christ to take that power from men, which they (so long as they have it) will not forbear managing and making use of to keep him from his power? Consider these things, O England! for they belong to thy peace, and toward the mitigation of thy sorrow and misery in the day of thy calamity.

This is from one who hath mourned over thee, while thou hast been rejoicing,

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

Oh that thou couldst know, at least in this last hour of thy day, how to make thy peace with the Lord, and not begin that controversy afresh with him, which he hath already so much shattered and broken thee about, that the dregs of the cup, whereof thou hast already so largely drunk, might pass from thee!

An Explanatory Postscript.

We read of the getting up of another power than Christ's in the church, after the days of the apostles. 1 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 2. which power was to last forty-two months, even all the time of antichrist's reign; by which power the beast should make war with and overcome the saints in all kindreds, tongues, and nations. ver. 5, 6, 7. And all this wickedness and persecutions of the saints should be committed under a pretence of righteousness, as if it were for Christ, and the well-government of his church, from a true and rightly-derived and well-balanced power. 1 Thess. ii. 8, 9. Now this power will last in one form or other, even till the very coming of Christ: and then shall that wicked spirit (in all his workings, in all his various appearings and transformings, as if he still were for God, and for the right and orderly government of his church and temple) be discovered, by degrees consumed, and at last destroyed. ver. 8. And then the kings or powers of the earth, which gave their power and strength to the beast (helping him to cause men to worship. Rev. xiii. 15, 16.), making war with the Lamb and his suffering saints by their laws, whips, prisons, fines, &c., shall be overcome by him, who fighteth against them with "the Spirit of his mouth," and by his "truth, meekness, and righteousness," which shines in the hearts and conversations of his "called, faithful, and chosen." Rev. xvii. 13, 14. Psa. xlv. 4, 5.

The power of Christ cannot hurt any of his lambs (it never forced the weak ones, the tender-conscienced, but he carries the lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. Isa. xl. 11.). He had rather have many hypocrites spared, than one ear of wheat plucked up. Mat. xiii. 29. That power therefore in the church which spares the hypocrites (who can easily comply with an outward conformity in worship, without feeling an inward life or virtue), but lights heavy on that which is tender and shy in

matters of worship (knowing that it must give an account thereof to Christ), that is not the true church-power, but at best but a counterfeit of the true.

THE

GREAT QUESTION

CONCERNING THE

LAWFULNESS OR *UNLAWFULNESS*

OF

SWEARING

UNDER THE GOSPEL,

STATED AND CONSIDERED OF;

FOR

THE SATISFACTION OF SUCH AS DESIRE TO SCAN THE THING IN THE WEIGHT OF GOD'S SPIRIT;

AND

TO SEE THE TRUE AND CLEAR DETERMINATION OF IT IN HIS UNERRING LIGHT.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

THE GREAT QUESTION, &C.

WHETHER it be lawful for Christians (who know Christ, the substance of all the shadows under the law, and are in the new covenant) to swear upon weighty occasions, as it was lawful for the Jews to do under the old covenant. Or, Whether Christ alloweth his disciples to swear in solemn cases, as Moses did allow his disciples.

Ans. For the clearing of this weighty controversy, to all such as singly desire to know the truth (as it is in Jesus) in this particular, that their hearts may bow to him therein, and not be overtaken with the reasonings and subtleties of the carnal mind (which never knew nor can know the power, but hath always been, and still is, setting up dead images of God's truths and of his worship, out of the power), these few things following would be considered of. First, What an oath is. Or, The nature of a right and true oath under the law. Secondly, The ground or occasion of its institution. Thirdly, The cases wherein an oath was to be used. Fourthly, The proper end and service of an oath. Fifthly, The suitableness of its nature to its end and service. Lastly, The persons to whom the use of an oath was proper in itself, and intended and allowed by God; and whether there be any persons to whom it is not proper, and to whom the Lord doth not allow it. This last is the main, and will of itself determine the thing; but yet a brief consideration of the former may not be unprofitable, to make way for a clearer leading and insight into it.

First, As touching *an oath, what it is*, or *the nature of it*. A true and lawful oath under the law was an engagement

or bond upon the soul, Num. xxx. 2. by the name of the Lord, Deut. x. 20. to the speaking of truth in things *affirmed*, and to the performance of truth in things promised. It was as a seal to bind fallen man (man fallen from the truth, from the uprightness) to truth in his *words* and *promises*, either to God or man. This is the nature and use of *an oath*; to wit, to bind the soul to truth, to be such an engagement upon the soul, as, if there be any fear of God there, it cannot but dread to break, knowing, that "the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain."

Secondly, *The ground or occasion of an oath*, is the fall of man from truth, from innocency, from the uprightness which engaged him to truth before his fall. This made the Jews stand in need of this bond under the law, in their purposes and promises towards God; and the same thing likewise made them stand in need of it one from another, to ratify and confirm truth between them.

Thirdly, *The cases wherein an oath was to be used*, which were chiefly these four.

1. In case of a promise or vow to God. 2. In case of promise to man. That the truth, integrity, and plain intention of the heart might stand, and there might be no departing therefrom, in the thing promised, either to God or man; an oath in that state was found useful to bind the soul thereto.

3. In case of pronouncing or declaring the truth of a thing which was weighty, that there might be a clear and satisfactory ground of belief.

4. In case of controversy between parties, where the controversy could not be determined, but by taking the confession of the one party for truth; there that party was to seal his confession with an oath, and so the other to rest satisfied therewith, and the controversy thereupon end.

Fourthly, *The end of an oath*, which is for final confirmation, and avoiding all further strife and contention about the thing sworn to. By binding the thing (promised or affirmed) with an oath, the thing is confirmed; and now there is no

more strife in the heart concerning the thing, if relating to God, or between man and man in things relating to them; but the striving nature is bound down by the oath of God, wherewith the thing is ratified, and so the doubt and uncertainty removed, and the contest ended. Thus of right it ought to be, and is, where the oath is forcible and in its proper service.

Fifthly, *The suitableness of its nature to the end aimed at by it.* Man out of the Christian life, can go no further than to engage himself by the fear and dread of that God, whom he professeth to worship and serve, and who cannot but be jealous of his name and honor, and ready to vindicate the taking of it in vain. Man under the law could not bind himself to God, in any promise or service more than this; nor can there be any greater bond or seal of truth given by one man to another, in the fallen state, than this. And he that will venture to break this, what but deceit and treachery can be expected from him? insomuch as no other engagement from him can be of weight, he hereby manifesting the want of that in his mind and spirit, whereupon all ties are to fasten.

Sixthly, *The persons to whom the use of an oath was proper and lawful, and for whom it was instituted; and whether there be any persons to whom it is not proper and lawful, and for whose use it was not instituted.*

To find out this distinctly and truly, we must consider the several conditions of man since the creation; and observe to which of those it is useful and proper in itself, and allowed by God, and to which it is not useful in itself, nor allowed by God.

There have been four estates or conditions of mankind since the creation:

1. *An estate of innocency;* an estate of integrity, of purity, of righteousness, wherein man could not lie or deceive; but his promises to God, and his words to men, must needs be *Yea*, and *Amen:* for it was impossible to man, who was made in God's image (which is truth) to lie or deceive, until the deceit entered him, and drew him out of the truth.

2. There was (and still is) *an estate of deep captivity*, wherein this truth and innocency was wholly lost; and man wholly corrupted in his spirit and nature, and wholly degenerated from God. This was the estate of the heathen, who knew not God generally, nor desired after him, but walked in the vanity of their minds, and were given up to their own hearts' lusts. Yet among some of these the eternal principle of life was stirring, which did check them, and offer to guide them out of this estate; which they that hearkened unto did not remain in the fall with the rest, but felt the power of that, which reproved and checked them, circumcising their hearts; and, in their obedience thereto, justifying them in their consciences before God.

3. There was *an estate of shadowy redemption*, which was not the true estate of redemption itself, or they the true people which were to be redeemed; but a shadow of the redemption, a shadow of the redeemed people, a shadow of the way and path of life; wherein were figures of the heavenly substance, the heavenly people, the heavenly things, the heavenly inheritance, the heavenly food, &c. But all these figures, in and under the law, were not the true heavenly and invisible things themselves, but outward and visible signs and representations of them.

4. There was, and blessed be the Lord, now at length (after the great, long, and dark night of apostasy) again is brought forth, *an estate of true redemption;* wherein the soul is brought back from the death, from the captivity, from the fall, from the deceit, and from the shadows, into the truth, into the pure life, into the innocency, into the uprightness; wherein Christ (the power of God) is witnessed, and the soul new formed in his pure image, and become a new creature, having a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, a new nature, a new life and spirit, (in the newness of which life it is to live and walk) a new course and conversation, a new place to walk and have its conversation in, even in that very heaven from whence it looks for the Saviour; wherein also all old things, which came in by the fall, and all the old shadows of the law, are to pass away, and in this state all things are to be-

come new. And this is not only to be expected in the perfection of this state, but belongs (in its measure and degree) to the very beginning of it: for even so soon as a man is ingrafted into Christ, even then he is a new creature, and all things then begin to become new unto him, and he is then to begin departing from all old things, both of the natural or heathenish state, and of the Jewish state, until he hath left them all behind. The apostle saith expressly, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, all things are become new." Christ, the Lord and Master of all believers, who himself was not in the world, calleth all his disciples and followers out of the world. How, out of the world? Doth he call them from having any being or commerce in the earth, or in the world? Nay, not so; but to come out of the *evil and corrupt state, practices*, and *ways* of the world; out of the *earthly ways* of the Heathens, out of the *earthly ordinances* and *observations* of the Jews; yea, even out of every thing in both, which was not of the Father, but of the world; and this made them a gazing-stock to both, and the scorn and hatred of both, wherever they came.

These are the four estates or conditions of mankind since the creation; in one of which, all men that ever were, have been to be found; and according to the estate and condition wherein man is found, is the law of God to him, and his requirings of him.

Now let any man, in the fear of the Lord God, weigh and consider, to which sort or sorts of these an oath was useful in itself, and allowed by God, and to which not. Was it useful in the innocent state? Or did God appoint it there, when man could not but speak truth? Or is it useful in the redeemed estate, where a greater bond is received, and professedly held forth, than the innocency of man's nature was? Is not Christ the truth, the substance? Is not he that is in him, the new creature? Were not all the oaths, and shadows of the law, to last till Christ the substance came? Is not this the bond of the gospel? And doth not this seal truth, and keep to truth more firmly than the oath under the law

could? and the greater bond being come, doth not the lesser bond, which signified it, flee away and vanish, and the use of it now become both needless and unlawful? Men may reason subtly, and persuade strongly against the truth; but we know certainly and infallibly, in the light of the Lord, that the use of an oath was not for man in innocency, nor for man under the power and virtue of the redemption by Christ (which brings man back into the truth, into the innocency, and into that life and strength which preserves in the truth and innocency), but for fallen man, for man erred from the truth and covenant of God: and it is very manifest to us, that for a disciple of Christ, who hath received the law from his lips against swearing, to be brought back again to swearing (the bond of man in the fallen state, and under the law) is no less than a denial of Christ, who is his life and redeemer out of the fallen state, and who also is the substance, which ends the oaths; and he that hath ever known the pure power of his life, and received the pure law thereof in the clear openings of his spirit, must not depart from thence, from the feeling of that, into the fleshly reasonings, into consultations with the fleshly-wise part, which will be sure to give such interpretations of scriptures as may avoid the cross; but keep to that power which begat him, and to that principle wherein he was begotten; and there he shall never be able to get beyond the *yea* and *amen* in Christ, beyond the confessing of the truth in the presence and life of it, which is the end and substance of swearing under the law; and therefore the Apostle Paul, who several times, and in several cases, refers to the prophecies of the prophets, who foretold of things under the gospel in law-phrases, renders the word confess, instead of swear, as may appear by comparing Rom. xiv. 11. and Philip. ii. 11. with Isa. xlv. 23. That which the law called swearing, the gospel calls confessing, each of them speaking of the same thing, in the proper dialect of each; which confessing in the life, in the truth, in the renewed principle, is the weight and substance of that, whereof the oath was but a shadow. For what is the sub-

stance and intent of an oath? Is not the intent of it to bind to the speaking or performing of truth? And what is it that binds? Is it the shadow or the substance? Is it the words of an oath, or the sense and weight of the thing upon the spirit? It was not the *form* of an oath, but the *weight* and *substance* hid underneath, which bound the Jew under the law; and if there be no more weight and substance in the *yea* and *nay* of a disciple under the gospel, it must needs be more binding to them, and hath also more true ground of satisfaction in it (to other Christians at least) than a Jew's or Heathen's swearing; yea, and if the men of the world would but freely speak their hearts, it would be acknowledged to be of more weight with them also. Who of those who have observed and known our conversation, and upright speaking and behavior for these many years, both towards the various rulers and authorities of the nation, and also towards all men of all sorts, would not prefer our *yea* and *nay* before the oaths of others?

Obj. *But though a Christian may not swear in relation to himself; yet why may he not swear in relation to the satisfaction of others, seeing God himself sware in that respect, who was as much in the power and virtue of that life which binds from swearing as a Christian can be?*

Ans. 1. God (being not bound himself by the laws wherewith he binds the creature) may either himself, or by an instrument (in his immediate life and power), do that which the creature hath not liberty from him to do; but that is no warrant in general, but the disciple is particularly to eye the rule from his Master, CHRIST JESUS (who is Lord over the household of faith, and who was as faithful in all his house as a Lord, as Moses, the servant, was in his house), by whom the same God, who once allowed oaths to the Jews, hath now wholly forbidden swearing. And let the disciple diligently and faithfully eye the laws of the new covenant (which are written by, and received from, the ingrafted word of faith in the heart) he shall find oaths excluded there, as a part of the old covenant, even as a literal and shadowy confirmation of truth among the Jews under Moses' dispen-

sation for the time of the law; but the grace and truth itself is the substance, and the faith received is the seal of truth under the gospel, both towards God and man.

Ans. 2. A Christian may not swear in relation to the satisfaction of others, because he is to hold forth his light, his life, his principle, in the eye of the world; he is to testify to the worth and excellency of it, that it is a greater and firmer bond to him, both towards God and man, than any oaths either of the Heathen or of the Jews can be. Now his entering into their way of confirmation of things, which is short of his own, is an undervaluing and disparagement of the worth and weight of that principle of truth which God hath given him, and raised up in him: it is indeed a denying of it: for entering into the law-bond, is laying of the gospel-bond by; and an offering of that as a bond, which indeed once was so, but is now excluded by the law of faith from being a bond any longer, and hath lost its virtue. And if men would but open their eyes, they might easily see how little oaths bind, and how unprofitable they are to the end and use for which they are intended: but the *yea*, and *amen* in Christ (the principle of life) cannot be broken; but he that abides in him must perform the *yea* and *amen*, which is firm in him.

Ans. 3. A Christian or disciple may not swear under the gospel, because Christ hath brought in confession of the truth, from the principle of his life, instead of oaths; which is made good not only by the Apostle Paul's rendering of *swearing* in the law-time, *confessing*, in the fulfilling of it under the gospel; but also by Christ's bringing in the *yea, yea*, and *nay, nay*, instead of the law's swearing. In the Jew, the oath was the seal or confirmation under the law; in the disciple, who is in the life, and hath learned the truth of Christ, the life, the *yea, yea*, the *nay, nay*, is appointed him by Christ instead of the oath. And though the subtlety and fleshly wisdom strive hard to wrest that place out of the hands of the simplicity, yet they shall never be able to do it: but he that looks on it with a single eye in the light of that Spirit wherein it was wrote, shall plainly see

Christ's drift to be to take away the shadow, even to abolish that use of swearing, which was proper and allowed to the Jews under the law, and to bring the confession or denial of the thing, the *yea, yea*, and *nay, nay*, (from the gospel spirit and principle in the disciple) in the stead of it; which to make more manifest to the honest, simple, and naked heart, which is willing to take up the will and truth of God in every thing, with all the crosses that attend it, let these few things following be uprightly considered of.

First, That slight, trivial, and frequent oaths were not allowed under the law; but forbidden by the law, as the taking God's holy and dreadful name in vain.

Secondly, That though vain oaths were then forbidden, yet solemn oaths, weighty oaths, such as were needful and useful to the thing intended, were allowed under the law. So in all those cases before expressed, oaths were allowed and justifiable, so that they were but careful to perform them, and did not forswear themselves.

Thirdly, Christ brings in an exception against the use of this lawful swearing under the law, as the word *but* doth plainly signify, and forbiddeth swearing wholly, altogether, or at all. The law saith, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself;" that is the substance of what the law forbids: it allows swearing but forbids forswearing, but I say unto you, ye shall not only avoid forswearing, but swearing also, and that wholly, or altogether: "but I say unto you, swear not at all."

Fourthly, Christ brings in another thing instead of swearing, a thing far more suitable to the truth, plainness, and simplicity of the gospel, which is confessing the thing, or speaking the thing in truth, just as it is, either by way of affirmation or denial; "but let your yea be yea, and nay nay."

And there is liberty enough left to a disciple to satisfy any man concerning the truth of a thing by confession, as much as by an oath: for is it not full as weighty under the gospel to confess the presence of God, or that he is witness, or that we speak the thing in his fear, and in the feeling of

his life and power, as it were under the law to swear *by his life, by his fear, by his power*, or the like? Is not the confessing of God by a Christian of more weight than the swearing by him from a Jew or Heathen? O nations and powers of the earth! seek truth, seek righteousness, and do not set up a form or image of things in your own wills, and according to your own wisdom and inventions, above the power of God.

And let it be duly considered, whether the powers of this nation deal kindly with the Lord, in exacting an oath from his people, who (not in the least disaffection to them, but only in fidelity of conscience to Christ, their Lord and master) cannot but refuse it.

The question is concerning their fidelity and obedience to the king; that is the thing which an oath is required to ratify and confirm. Now the swearing itself, or formal taking of an oath, is of little value; but to be obedient, to be faithful, is the thing of value. The case then stands thus: the Lord hath so formed them, that they cannot but be faithful and obedient. The Lord hath raised up that principle in them, which cannot hurt the king, or any man, nor cannot stand by and see him or any man hurt, without endeavoring to prevent it. Here is their strength of performing good, and avoiding evil; and their *yea* and *nay*, from this principle, is the best security which they can possibly give to any man (and he who hath thus formed them in the *pure principle* of his life, hath likewise forbidden them to swear). But this cannot be accepted for want of the other confirmation; to wit, of *swearing*, which came in by the fall, and was allowed among the shadows of the law, but is forbidden by the gospel.

Now O king! shall not God's people be faithful and obedient to the Lord, as well as to thee? Shall they not be true to the principle of life, wherein they are begotten and brought forth in the love and good-will to all, and out of enmity to any? Hath God raised up in them a principle which cannot deceive; and will not the *yea* and *nay* of that serve (after so much experience, through so many changes),

but they must either break Christ's command, and hazard their souls, or else lose their liberties and estates?

Oh! that men would wait on the Lord, for his pure fear to be written on their hearts by the finger of his Spirit, that they might come out of the fleshly wisdom into the womb of the eternal wisdom, from whence our principle came; that they might be able to see and justify the purity, righteousness, nobility, and worth of it; and that they might feel its security from all that is out of the good-will, out of the love, out of the life, and out of the peace; that so there might be an end of all strife, rebellion, heart-burnings, plots, and all manner of wickedness and ungodliness, which have no place in it, but daily waste and wither where it is sown and grows, even till they come to an end; and till the righteousness and pure innocency fill the room and place which they had, both in the heart and mind within, and in the life and conversation outwardly.

And let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity, and look well to his goings: for the darkness of the thick night of apostasy is already past, and the true light now again shineth. Blessed is the eye which seeth it, and the heart which is established in it, in the midst of those terrible and dreadful shakings and confusions, which must not end here, but go over all nations. Oh that this nation could once bow to it, that it might be happy, and its rents and breaches be healed for ever!

SOMEWHAT

SPOKEN TO A

WEIGHTY QUESTION.

CONCERNING THE

MAGISTRATE'S PROTECTION OF THE INNOCENT.

WHEREIN IS HELD FORTH

THE BLESSING AND PEACE WHICH NATIONS OUGHT TO WAIT FOR AND EMBRACE IN THE LATTER DAYS.

WITH

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

For the Serious and Wise in Heart throughout this Nation to ponder, for diverting God's Wrath, if possible, from breaking forth upon it.

Also

A brief Account of what the People called QUAKERS desire, in reference to the Civil Government.

With a few Words to such as by the everlasting Arm of God's Power have been drawn and gathered out of the Apostasy, into the living Truth and Worship.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. Hos. ii. 18.

SOMEWHAT

SPOKEN TO A

Weighty Question, &c.

QUESTION.

Whether the magistrate, in righteousness and equity, is engaged to defend such, who, by the peaceableness and love which God hath wrought in their spirits, and by that law of life, mercy, good-will, and forgiveness, which God, by his own finger, hath written in their hearts, are taken off from fighting, and cannot use a weapon, destructive to any creature, to defend him.

ANSWER.

MAGISTRACY was intended by God for the defence of the people; not only of those who have ability, and can fight for them, but of such also who cannot, or are forbidden by the love and law of God written in their hearts so to do. Thus women, children, sick persons, aged persons, and also priests in nations (who have ability to fight, but are exempted by their function, which is not equivalent to the exemption which God makes by the law of his Spirit in the heart) have the benefit of the law, and of the magistrate's protection, without fighting for the defence of either: and is it not most righteous and equal, that fighting, which came in by the fall, should come to an end in such whom God draws out of the fall; and that magistrates (who have power given them to rule by God, and ought to rule under him) should not require fighting of them whom the Lord of lords hath redeemed out of the fighting nature, and chosen to be

as examples of meekness and peaceableness in the places where they live? How can he fight with creatures, in whom is love and good-will towards those creatures, and whose bowels are rolling over them, because of their wanderings in the lusts, in the strife, and in the wars? Fighting is not suitable to a gospel Spirit; but to the spirit of the world, and the children thereof. The fighting in the gospel is turned inward against the lusts, and not outward against the creatures. There is to be a time, when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." When the power of the gospel spreads over the whole earth, thus shall it be throughout the earth; and where the power of the Spirit takes hold of and overcomes any heart at present, thus will it be at present with that heart. This blessed state, which shall be brought forth in the general in God's season, must begin in particulars; and they therein are not prejudicial to the world, nor would be so looked upon, if the right eye in man were but open to see with, but emblems of that blessed state which the God of glory hath promised to set up in the world in the days of the gospel. And though by this means there may seem to be a weakening of the strength of the magistrate, and of the defence of that nation wherein God causeth the virtue and power of his truth to spread in the hearts of his people; yet in truth it is not so, but a great strengthening. For if righteousness be the strength of a nation, and the seed of God the support of the earth, then where righteousness is brought forth, and where the seed of God springs up and flourisheth, that nation grows strong; and instead of the arms and strength of man, the eternal strength overspreads that nation, and that wisdom springs up in the spirits of men, which is better than weapons of war; and the wisdom which is from above is pure and peaceable, and teacheth to make peace, and to remove the cause of contention and wars, and uniteth the heart to the Lord, in waiting upon him for counsel, strength, and preservation in this state, who brought into it. Now is not this much better and safer than the present estate of things in the world; first, to

have the cause of wars removed, and a sweet, peaceable, righteous Spirit in the stead thereof; secondly, to have a peaceable and righteous generation, whom the Lord hath made and preserved so, breathing to the Lord for peace, good, and prosperity to the nation, and magistrates thereof, and to stretch forth his arm to be a defence about them; thirdly, to have the God of heaven engaged by his power to defend that power and magistracy which defends righteousness in general, and particularly his people in their obedience unto him, whom it is most righteous for them to obey, and for the magistrate, who claims his rule and dominion under God, to protect them in? Were not this much better both for magistrates and people than the present estate? Oh that that were awakened in man which can rightly discern and judge!

Obj. But this is an Utopian state, or a world in the moon. Is it possible that ever there should be such a state here on earth?

Ans. 1. When the principle of God, which lies hid in the hearts of men, over which the corrupt nature hath grown, and upon which the spirit of darkness in men tramples, shall be raised and come into dominion; righteouness, peace, and good-will shall spring up as naturally among men, as wars, strifes, divisions, emulations, heart-burnings, &c. now do.

2. There is a promise of such a state, "when the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and lie down with the lamb; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and nothing shall hurt or destroy upon God's holy mountain;" but the nations, who have been full of war, shall throw away their weapons, become subject to the spirit of peace and righteousness, and learn war no more; when the wisdom of the wise, and strength of the strong, shall be broken in pieces; and the little child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the cockatrice's den, and lead all. As certainly as the Lord God is true, so this must be in the Lord's season: and will it not be happy when it comes to pass? Who would hinder it?

Who would strive to keep the old heavens and the old earth standing, which must be dissolved before the new heavens and the new earth (wherein dwells righteousness) can be formed and brought forth?

3. this state was in a fair forwardness once, before the universal apostasy from that truth and power which God had sown in the earth, upon the breathing of and sending forth his Spirit among his disciples, according to his promise. Precious was that seed, great the growth of it, the woman, or true church, full of beauty and glory, and brought forth the man-child, which was to rule all nations; but it hath pleased the Lord to adjourn that day till after the night of apostasy, catching up the man-child to heaven, and causing the woman to fly into the wilderness, where she hath been hid ever since from all but the inward eye of the inward Israel: and the world, in the heathenish nature, hath been crying up holy church, holy church! to her who hath set upon the beast, and been drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; but the tender spouse, the Lamb's wife, the mother of all the lambs, hath been banished from the earth, and a cruel, bloody step-mother set over all the tender-conscienced ever since. Oh woful, woful hath been the state of the true church, and of all the children of truth, all this dark night of the apostasy! but the Lord is putting an end to it: and though this false woman seems to be recovering ground, and setting her feet over the necks of the lambs again, and begins to think she shall prevail, and sit as a lady and queen over the consciences of God's heritage for ever; yet she shall find that strong is the Lord God who hath begun to judge her; and into the sea which she raiseth shall she sink like a stone, and her fall shall be great and speedy: for even in one day shall her misery overtake and devour her.

4. After this long night of apostasy the Lord hath begun to make some preparations towards this state again. He hath opened his treasuries; he hath let forth the power of his truth; he hath poured down of his Spirit to sanctify and gather a people unto himself; he hath opened the prin-

ciple of life in the hearts of many, and in a great measure drawn them into it; who, so far as they are renewed thereby, and found there, are made peaceable, pure, meek, gentle, innocent, upright-hearted, and tender-conscienced, both towards God and man. And though multitudes of reproaches have been cast upon them, yet the Lord hath been pleased to cause their innocency and integrity to shine, to the wiping of them off in a great degree, and will, in due time, bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day. And what remains toward the carrying on of this work, but the Lord's prospering of this principle, and blowing upon the other? As the Lord doth this, so will it go on; and the nations, kings, princes, great ones, as this principle is raised in them, and the contrary wisdom, the earthly policy, which undoes all, brought down, so will they feel the blessing of God in themselves, and become a blessing to others. Oh that there were an ear to hear! for this is the only way of healing this nation (which hath been so grievously torn), as will be acknowledged when woful experience makes it manifest. But man in prosperity cannot hear, and that enforceth from the Lord, by the turning of his hand, the bringing upon him the day of his adversity; which, could he have hearkened to in the day of his prosperity, might have been escaped: for God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; he is necessitated to it for his own glory's sake, the preservation and defence of his truth and people, and for the carrying on of his work.

Obj. But if all men were of this mind, and none would fight, suppose a nation should be invaded, would not the land of necessity be ruined?

Ans. 1. Whenever such a thing shall be brought forth in the world, it must have a beginning before it can grow and be perfected. And where should it begin but in some particulars in a nation, and so spread by degrees, until it hath overspread the nation, and then from nation to nation, until the whole earth be leavened? Therefore whoever desires to see this lovely state brought forth in the general, if he

would further his own desire, must cherish it in the particular. And oh! that men would not spend their strength, and hazard the loss of all in cherishing pretences and names of Christianity, but would pray to the Lord at length to open that eye in them which can see the loveliness of the truth, power, and virtue of Christianity; that they might cherish that tenderness of conscience wherein the truth grows and springs up in its virtue and power. And then perhaps they would soon acknowledge the happiness of the world to depend upon the growth of that principle, and of that people, who are now despised by the world, and cannot but be so by the spirit and wisdom of the world, which lies in wickedness, they being drawn out of, and testifying against, it.

2. It is not for a nation, coming into the gospel life and principle, to take care before-hand how they shall be preserved; but the gospel will teach a nation (if they hearken to it) as well as a particular person, to trust the Lord, and to wait on him for preservation. Israel of old stood not by their strength and wisdom, and preparations against their enemies; but in quietness and confidence, and waiting on the Lord for direction, Isa. xxx. 15. and shall not such now, who are true Israelites, and have indeed attained to the true gospel state, follow the Lord in the peaceable life and Spirit of the gospel, unless they see by rational demonstration before-hand how they shall be preserved therein? I speak not this against any magistrates' or people's defending themselves against foreign invasions, or making use of the sword to suppress the violent and evil-doers within their borders (for this the present estate of things may and doth require, and a great blessing will attend the sword where it is borne uprightly to that end, and its use will be honorable; and while there is need of a sword, the Lord will not suffer that government, or those governors, to want fitting instruments under them for the managing thereof, to wait on him in his fear to have the edge of it rightly directed); but yet there is a better state, which the Lord hath already brought some into, and which nations are to expect and travel tow-

ards. Yea, it is far better to know the Lord to be the defender, and to wait on him daily, and see the need of his strength, wisdom, and preservation, than to be ever so strong and skilful in weapons of war.

3. If the Lord shall undertake the defence of a nation by his Spirit and power, what can hurt that nation? What power of man can reach it, to disturb the peace of it? "The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." Isa. xxxi. 3. What could Sennacherib with his army do against one angel in the time of the law? How many of his host were slain in one night? And what power then shall be able to prevail over a nation brought into the peaceable Spirit of the gospel, and defended therein by the mighty power of God himself? Will not God be as sure a defence over the true Israel, in the way and dispensation wherein he leadeth them, as ever he was over the representative Israel, in the way and dispensation wherein he led them? Will he not preserve and defend that nation whom he first teacheth to leave off war, that they shall not be made a prey of, while he is teaching other nations the same lesson?

God promised Israel of old, that when they went up thrice in the year to appear before the Lord, according to his command, he would keep it out of the hearts of the nations from so much as desiring their land, much more from entering and taking it from them in the mean time, though they might seem watchful after, and sufficiently greedy of, such an opportunity, they being cast out of the land, and having had it taken from them before. Exod. xxxiv. 24. The Lord also can now keep it out of the hearts of the nations from invading or prejudicing that nation which he shall first draw into the peaceable Spirit. Or if he see not good to do that, he can defend those that have followed him out of the earthly spirit, wisdom, and strength, by ways that man knows not of; nor may it be fit for him to know, till the Lord bring it forth. Israel of old was not to know the deliverance beforehand; but to trust to the Lord. Under the gospel, the Lord giveth more faith than to Israel

of old under the law, and therefore may justly require greater confidence in greater straits. And awaken, O earth! behold the Israel of the Lord, whom he hath begotten and brought forth in the earth, after the long, dark night of apostasy, and ye shall see what hearts the Lord hath given them to trust him, in all the straits and trials wherewith he pleases to exercise them, and what the Lord will do for them when they are brought to the brink of the pit, and when it seemeth impossible for them to escape utter ruin and destruction. The eye which the Lord hath given them seeth the Lord and his strength; and the heart which he hath created anew in them, naturally feareth the everlasting power, which reacheth both to the body and soul for ever: but as for whole multitudes of nations, they are but as "the drop of a bucket," and, in their greatest wisdom and strength, but as "vanity, as the small dust of the balance, as nothing before him, and less than nothing to him."

Consider this, O ye great men! O ye wise men, and deep politicians! all ye have done, or can ever do, in relation to overturning any thing that God hath purposed, what are ye therein? Or what will your work come to? It is just like "the small dust of the balance;" it hinders not at all the weight of his power on the other hand, but he will carry on his work, bring to pass what he hath purposed in himself, and promised to his people; and all your councils, wisdom, strength, hopes, resolutions, and present or future advantages against him and his work, shall hinder him no more than the small dust in the scale of a balance which the wind blows away, and it is not. Be wise therefore, O ye sons of men! fear before your Maker; wait in his fear for his counsel, that ye may not be suffered by him to undertake any thing against him, lest before ye are aware ye fall before him. Oh! let every one in fear remember that passage, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance," &c. Forgetting the Lord in the day of prosperity, causeth much increase of the anguish and sorrow of heart in the day of adversity. O ye that are in present power! consider how unwilling ye would be to

have the Lord turn his hand upon you, and bring you under again! Oh! provoke him not, for he is able to do it, as he was to overturn those which went before. It were far better for you now to fear the Lord, and prevent it, than to bewail and repent afterwards. Oh! reject not the love and counsel of the Most High (which would now preserve you) as those which went before you did.

There is a desire in all men (in whom the principle of God is not wholly slain) after righteousness; which desire will be more and more kindled by God in nations, before righteousness and peace meet together and be established in them. Now such and so great hath been the kindling of this desire in this nation, and such is the state thereof, that nothing can satisfy the heart of it but righteousness: this it longeth after at the bottom: this the governors which were before might have, and the governors that now are (by asking counsel of the principle of God within themselves, and keeping close thereto) may answer the nation in; but if the consultations be not with the Lord, in the principle of life which came from him, but with the wisdom and policy which is of the earth, and from beneath, and not from above, that will incline to self, and to corruption, and never bring forth righteousness; nor can the blessing of God attend it, nor the peace which accompanieth righteousness be reaped from it.

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

For the Serious and Wise in Heart throughout this Nation to ponder, that they may send up earnest Prayers to Almighty God, and use their best Endeavors in their several Places and Stations, to prevent that dreadful Storm of Wrath which hath long hung over this Nation; that at length it break not forth like a Fire which none can quench, or like a Flood which none can stop.

1. Did not God, by the power of his Spirit in the apostles' days, gather a people out of the world unto himself, and by his wisdom, and according to his heavenly will, build them up into a church, or holy temple, for his Spirit to inhabit and dwell in, and for himself to be honored and worshipped in Spirit and truth, according as he should teach them, and require of them?

2. Did not the same spirit which built this church not only signify that the love should wax cold, and there be a falling away from the truth, and warn the churches of Asia of the removal of their candlesticks, but also foretell of the total dissolution of that building as to its outward state [upon the close of the sharp battle by the dragon and his angels, or false ministers, with Michael and his true church and ministers], insomuch as the church herself should fly into the wilderness, and her seed be made war with, and persecuted up and down the nations all the time of the apostasy afterwards? See Rev. xii.

3. Was not this desolate estate of the church to remain and last all the allotted time thereof, which is expressed to be forty-two months, twelve hundred and sixty days, or a

time, times, and half a time, wherein the beast should rule, antichrist sit in God's temple, and the dragon be worshipped there, instead of the living God; and also the lambs of Christ, and witnesses of Jesus (who retain the worship in Spirit and truth, and cannot join with any of the false ways of worship set up in the nations) torn and rent by the woman which appears instead of the true church, but is not? Rev. xi. 2. and xii. 6. 14. and xiii. 4. and xvii. 6.

4. Doth not this woman continue deceiving the nations and kings of the earth (whom she causeth to drink of her cup of knowledge, worship, doctrine, and discipline, whereby she blindeth their eyes, bewitcheth their hearts, and maketh them take her for the true church, who, notwithstanding all her glorious appearance, is but *Babylon in a mystery*, and, notwithstanding all her pretences for Christ, doth drink the blood of his true saints and witnesses); I say, doth she not continue her deceit till the very hour of her judgment, and until she hath brought the dreadful vials of the wrath of God both upon herself, and upon all that continue joining with her? Rev. xvii. 2. &c.

5. Is there not to be an end of this night of apostasy, and of the false church, with all her various habits, and dresses, and new paints, and arts of deceit, (though both have continued long) wherein Christ, the Lamb, comes forth in his power to fight with the beast, and the woman which rides thereon, and to smite the earth which remains infected with her fornications, (which withdraw and steal away the heart from the pure life and Spirit of Christ, and from his pure, living, spiritual worship, into a false, invented, dead, formal worship) that so he may restore and set up his pure spiritual worship again? Rev. xix. 11.

6. Are not the kings, powers, and inhabitants of the earth in great danger of fighting against the Lamb, in defence of this false church against his true church, (when he again comes to set it up in nations, after the expiration of the long night of apostasy) even to the hazard of utterly ruining themselves thereby? For those that fight against the Lamb must needs be overcome by him; his invisible strength, and

armies being much stronger than the visible armies, and all the outward strength in nations; though, to the outward eye, such may appear very great and invincible. Rev. xvii. 14.

7. Shall not the "kings of the earth," and the remaining powers at last (after the overthrow of many for joining to her, and striving to uphold her) "hate the whore" (which hath corrupted the earth with her fornications, drunk the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, brought misery and desolation on nations, &c.), "make her desolate, and burn her flesh with fire?" And were it not far better for them to do it before, rather than to hazard the ruining of themselves by seeking to uphold her? Rev. xvii. 16.

8. Is it possible for any nation (or any power in any nation) to hinder the shining forth of God's light therein, after the long night of apostasy? There is a spiritual day, as well as a natural day. There was a spiritual day before the apostasy, in the days of the apostles; and there is to be a spiritual day again after the apostasy, upon the Spirit of life's entering into the witnesses, their rising and standing on their feet, and the light of God shining forth from them. The spiritual day dependeth upon the shining of God's Spirit in the hearts of people (which did once shine forth, and doth begin to shine forth again), as the natural day dependeth upon the shining of the sun. Now who can hinder the arising or shining of the Sun of righteousness in the hearts of God's people? If ye can, then may ye prevent the carrying on of God's work of reformation in this nation, and throughout the world; but it is easier for you to stop the shining of the sun in the firmament. Oh! that the eye were opened which can see the way of peace, that the present governors might be blessed, and the nation blessed in them, and not the spirit of the nation, by a secret kindling, which none knows whence it comes, brought over them as a flood, as it was over them that went before them.

In that fear which God works in the heart, and out of the compass of that carnal wisdom and strength, on which man relies, is the wisdom, counsel, and preservation of the Most

High; both of particular persons, and also of nations. O Lord my God! if it may please thee, open the ear that can hear thy voice, that misery may be avoided, and thy peace and blessing may be sought after and enjoyed; or at least some of the force of that bitter storm, which sweepeth away and maketh desolate, even as the abomination of desolation hath entered, and of a long time made the earth desolate of the life and power of godliness, [may be] broken, that this nation may not be swallowed up in the dreadful breakings-forth of thy displeasure, but may be prepared by the correcting hand, and fitted for the day of thy mercy.

A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF WHAT THE

PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS DESIRE,

IN REFERENCE TO THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

THERE are three things which we cannot but earnestly desire in our hearts, and pray to the Lord for, as the proper means of settling aright the spirit of this nation: as also necessary for the growth of God's pure, living truth, and as just and equal in themselves.

1. Universal liberty for all sorts to worship God, according as Christ shall open men's eyes to see the truth, and according as he shall persuade their hearts by his Spirit; who is every man's master in religion, to whom they must stand or fall in all they do therein. Rom. xiv. 4.

Now if any man walk disorderly, and contrary to the light of Christ's Spirit either in doctrine or worship; that power which converts to God is to reprove and correct such an offender with the spiritual rod and sword, that he

may be again restored to the truth and obedience of the Spirit; but the magistrate is not for any such thing to imprison, fine, banish, or put him to death. For Christ is the judge of his people in the things of his kingdom, Heb. x. 30. and he hath appointed to have his spiritual weapons in a readiness, to revenge every disobedience and rebellion against his Spirit. 2 Cor. x. 4. The bringing in and applying of the magistrate's sword to this work, was never by the true church, in whose hand the sword of the Spirit was ever found sufficient; but the false church, not having the sword of the Spirit, is fain to uphold herself by the carnal weapons, or else she would soon fall. But the Lord God is wresting these out of her hands, and then his light will break forth without interruption, and her shame and nakedness soon appear.

2. That no laws formerly made, contrary to the principle of equity and righteousness in man, may remain in force; nor no new ones be made, but what are manifestly agreeable thereunto. All just laws, say the lawyers, have their foundation in right reason, and must agree with, and proceed from it, if they be properly good for, and rightly serviceable to, mankind. Now man hath a corrupt and carnal reason, which sways him aside from integrity and righteousness, towards the favoring of himself and his own party: and whatever party is uppermost, they are apt to make such new laws as they frame, and also the interpretation of the old ones, bend towards the favor of their own party. Therefore we would have every man in authority wait, in the fear of God, to have that principle of God raised up in him, which is for righteousness, and not selfish; and watch to be guided by that in all he does, either in making laws for government, or in governing by laws already made.

3. Seeing this nation is in such a shattered condition, and there have been so many breaches, parties, and factions in it, that no party might be bolstered up in enmity and opposition against another, but that every party might be considered, in what might be done for their ease and benefit, without danger and detriment to any other party. And

if I might be hearkened to, I would persuade those now in power, not to deal with their enemies as they formerly dealt with them, but as they would have been dealt with by them when they were in power.

I would also dehort and dissuade all people from plotting or contriving against this present government (for they must have their day, do all men what they can); but instead thereof to pray for them, that they may see the former errors in government, humble themselves before the Lord, and (by their meekness, gentleness, and righteousness, towards all) show forth the fruit of his long-afflicting hand upon them. But if they shall overlook, forget, and neglect the Lord, who hath shown so great mercy to them; and not in his fear wait on him, to preserve for them the ground and interest he hath given them; and think that now they are able to stand on their own legs, and by their own wisdom and strength; and so assay to carry on things according to their own will, and in the strength of their own wisdom; and so not mind for what end the Lord brought them in again, and what he expecteth to have effected by them, but strive again to settle the principles and practices which he hath been shaking, according to what seems right and good in their own eyes, measuring things by their own corrupt reason, selfish wisdom and interests, and not by the principle of God, common equity, and right reason;—I say, if it should come to be thus with them, ye shall not need to plot against them; for the Lord God Almighty, who, with ease, removed their enemies, and made way for them, can, with as great ease, remove them, and put the power into another hand.

Therefore, all people, be still and quiet in your minds, and wait for righteousness; for that is it which the Lord is making way for in this nation, and which he will set up therein; and he whose desire is not after that, and whose interest lies not there, will find himself disappointed, and at unawares surprised with what he expects not.

This is given forth that the powers and people may see what is the desire of our hearts in these respects, and how

upright our hearts are towards them in what is just and right, and that we are not at all against magistracy, laws, or government, though we cannot flatter or bend to them in that which is selfish and corrupt; and indeed against God, and not for the good of men. It was written long since, and intended then for service to the Lord and this nation, and his people therein, but the Lord ordered it otherwise. If he please now to accompany it with his blessing, and make way for the reasonableness, equity, and righteousness of it, to enter into the minds and hearts of them that are in power, it will be a good season for it, and they will find cause to bless the Lord, for putting of it into my heart at first, and for the publishing of it now.

A

FEW WORDS

TO SUCH AS HAVE

FELT THE POWER OF THE ENDLESS LIFE DRAWING;

AND HAVE FAITHFULLY FOLLOWED
THE LEADER OF THE FLOCK OF ISRAEL; WHO HATH OF LATE LED
HIS SHEEP IN SUCH PATHS AS HAVE NOT BEEN KNOWN
ALL THE NIGHT OF THE APOSTASY.

O YE children of the Most High! who have felt the breath of the eternal Spirit begetting you in the pure life, and drawing you out of this world; out of the vanities, out of the corruptions, out of the course and fashions, out of the invented ways and forms of worship, yea, out of the very root and principle thereof, into the worship and Spirit of truth, and into the fear of the Most High, which is wisdom's place and habitation, where the pure law of life is received, and the salvation begun, wrought out, and perfected. O ye dear plants of the right hand of eternity! fear not what is to come to pass in this visible creation (to break

the corrupt state thereof, and to make way for the springing up and spreading of his pure life and righteousness, which the corrupt estate, spirit, and principle of the world cannot but oppose, until it be broken and subjected), but sanctify the Lord of Hosts, and let him be your fear and dread; that he may compass you with the arm of his power, and hide you under the shadow of his hand, until he hath planted the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, in the sight of all her enemies, "Thou art my people." The Lord my God watch over you night and day! and preserve his living principle pure and fresh in you, and you in perfect subjection unto it; that ye may delight in what he hath begotten and preserved in you, and ye may be satisfied in the openings and overflowings of the love of his heart towards you. *Amen*, saith my soul!

From Aylesbury prison in Bucks, where my life breathes for the consolation and redemption of God's Israel, and for the turning of the captivity of the whole creation. 1661.

A

FEW WORDS

ABOUT THE

PRESENT WORK OF GOD IN THE WORLD.

WOULD any know what God is now doing on the earth, and what changes he is making therein? Let him sink out of the earthly part, even from that which blinds the pure eye; and waiting to have the understanding and eye of his spirit opened in the Lord, let him read these things following.

The Lord God of bowels and compassion, and of everlasting power and strength, hath heard the groans of Israel, whose consciences have been burdened, and whose souls have been bowed down, under the power of the beast, an-

der the hard yoke of antichrist, for these many generations; and he is arisen in his jealousy, in his indignation, and in his fury, to break the yoke, and let oppressed Israel go free.

He hath already stretched forth the arm of his power; the eye of Israel hath seen it, and hath, in part, felt the redemption, both inwardly and outwardly, which he hath brought to pass by it; and *a song of praise* hath been sung to him, who hath begun to deliver his people, and who is able perfectly to accomplish the work he hath begun, notwithstanding all the opposition he can meet with, whether from within or from without.

Lift up the eye of faith, and behold a great part of Israel already passed out of the land of Egypt, and the Spirit of the Lord awakening and rousing the rest, to leave their dark habitations in the land of darkness, oppression, and bondage, and to travel towards the good land of light, rest, and peace.

Arise, O Israel! shake thyself from the dust, O captive daughter of Zion! behold the courage of thy leader; let thy heart consider the arm of his strength, and the rod of his power, wherewith he is able to dash in pieces all his enemies. Fear not, worm Jacob, because of thine own weakness and unworthiness; thy strength is in thy leader, and thy comeliness not in what thou now appearest, but in what thy husband will put upon thee, when he shall circumcise thee thoroughly, and roll away thy reproach for ever.

Was all the strength of Pharoah able to keep Israel in the land of Egypt, or to drive them back after God had brought them forth? Were all the enemies in the wilderness able to stop their passage forward? Were all the enemies in Canaan, or the strength of their cities (though their walls might seem to reach to heaven, and the inhabitants thereof were tall and mighty) able to keep them out of the inheritance which God allotted them? Thy God, O worm Jacob, is the same for ever! he hath the same arm of power to stretch forth: yea, and his heart loveth his inward Israel full as dearly as ever he did the outward. Oh, wait on the Lord! believe in his name, trust his love; hope beyond

hope for the appearance of his power, and the Red sea shall divide, and the waters thereof stand on heaps; yea, Jordan shall be again driven back; the mountains shall skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs; yea, the whole earth shall tremble at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob: and glory, glory, glory, everlasting glory, power, rich praise, and endless life, shall sound through all the tents of Jacob in the wilderness, and through all the habitations of Israel in the holy land, to the King of glory, power, and life; even to the Lamb that sits upon the throne, who was, and is, and is to come! who hath reigned, doth reign, and will reign on his holy hill of Zion, over all the powers of darkness for evermore; *Amen, Hallelujah!*

O ye sons of men! how long will ye run after vanity, and seek to a refuge of lies for succor and stability, and so lose your share in the everlasting riches and glory, which God is preparing for the souls of his chosen? Why will ye die? Why will ye perish? Why will ye undo your souls? Why do ye so greedily sow misery, anguish, perplexity, and wrath for your poor souls to reap?

O God of love! who knowest the value and price of souls, pity thy poor creatures, and put a stop to this course of perishing, wherein so many multitudes are overtaken and pass down to the pit unawares! O thy bowels, thy bowels, thy wonderful bowels! Let them roll in thee, and work mightily, and in the strength of thy compassions bring forth thy judgment and thy mercy among the sons of men! Build up the tents of Shem; persuade Japhet to dwell therein; and let Canaan become a servant. Preserve the feet of thy saints for ever; shut up and silence the wicked one in the darkness; let not his strength or subtlety prevail against thee or thine any more: but let the fresh power of thy life, and the virtue of thy incomprehensible love redeem, fill, possess, and make glad the heart of thy creation for ever; *Amen, Amen.*

I. P.

Printed 1661.

CONCERNING

PERSECUTION:

WHICH IS

THE AFFLICTING OR PUNISHING THAT WHICH IS GOOD, UNDER THE PRETENCE OF ITS BEING EVIL.

Which practice is contrary to the very nature of mankind (so far as it is drawn out of the corruption and depravation), which would be good, and do good, and have good cherished, and evil suppressed, both in itself and others.

It is contrary also to all equal and righteous government, which is for the suppressing of evil, and cherishing of good; and not for the afflicting and crushing of that which is good, upon pretence of its being evil.

Yet this unhappy error will always be committed in nations and governments, until the proper right and just liberty of men's consciences be discerned, acknowledged, and allowed.

LIKEWISE THERE ARE SOME ANSWERS GIVEN TO THAT COMMON OBJECTION, AGAINST AFFORDING CONSCIENCE ITS DUE LIBERTY; BECAUSE EVIL PERSONS MAY PRETEND CONSCIENCE TO ESCAPE THE JUST PUNISHMENT OF THEIR EVIL DEEDS.

WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THAT SUPPOSED STUBBORNNESS, WHICH BY MANY IS OBJECTED AGAINST THE PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS.

Given forth in love to this nation, that at length the true bottom and foundation of a lasting peace and settlement may be espied; the spirits of the governors and people fixed thereon; and that dangerous rock of persecution (whereon both the powers and people of this nation have so often split) carefully avoided by all.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

PREFACE.

THERE hath been an enmity in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman, from the time of the promise even until now. God, in mercy to mankind, hath given unto him since the fall, a seed or principle of life; in the light and strength whereof he is to war against and subdue the corrupt principle, and so be freed from the curse, and become heir of the blessing. Against this principle all the powers of darkness fight (even in every particular man and woman) until they be overcome and subjected there: and against those in whom this pure principle reigns, all the powers of darkness in the world fight also, striving to make it miserable, and to bring it into death and captivity, that they might keep up the content and happiness of the corrupt state. All the nations of the earth have always warred against the principle of God and the people of his choice. In the time of the law, the Jews were the object of the envy and hatred of all the world; in the times of the gospel, the Jews in spirit were hated and hunted, in that day and hour, not only by Heathens, but also by such as were Jews according to the letter; and ever since the apostasy, by Christians also according to the letter; who are as great enemies to the Spirit and power as ever the Jews were.

Now all the misery of the world, as it at first came by departing from the principle of life, so it hath been ever since continued by men's joining with the principle of death and corruption, to oppose and withstand the workings of the principle of life, both in themselves and others. What man is there that hath not in him a witness against that which is evil? But where is that man who joins with this witness in him against the evil, and not with the evil against

this witness? Oh, how doth God's witness reprove for sin, making the heart (which is not sensual and brutish, but seriously considers its latter end) sad because of it! This is God's way of making the creature weary thereof, of weaning him from it, delivering him out of it, and so rescuing him from the wrath and everlasting burnings, which are the portion and inheritance of the wicked. But who is it that doth not strive to stop, silence, and suppress the witness in himself, that he might enjoy his lusts, ease, and content in the flesh, by keeping the sight and remembrance of the evil day far from him? And if he can do so, then he rejoiceth, and maketh merry over the testimony of the witness in himself; and when he hath so far prevailed, then he is in a good capacity to persecute others, who hear and obey the voice and testimony thereof in themselves.

That which is to redeem the world out of misery is the power of the gospel; and precious is the peace which comes thereby, after the work of the spiritual sword (with the trouble thereof) is finished. Oh, how blessed would the principle and power of life make the world, might it but have its free course therein! Oh, how happy is that man who bears the condemnation because of sin, follows the guidance of the living God, and waits for the day of his salvation! Oh the sweet inward peace of spirit which is enjoyed after the storm, and after the judgment of that which is to be judged and destroyed! And that which makes one person happy, the same must make nations happy. There is no true settlement, nor abiding security, but in the settled and abiding principle. God is arisen to shake the earth, and it can settle no more upon the old foundations: yea, the same God hath shrivelled up the old heavens, and they can no more be stretched forth again. "Behold I make all things new," saith the Lord, in the days of the gospel, when he stretcheth forth the arm of his power: and who is he which shall venture to establish the old heavens and the old earth, which the Lord God is removing, and causing to pass away, and abolish the new heavens and the new earth, which the Lord God hath created and formed,

and is establishing? Oh that men knew the place of wisdom, that they might be wise, and not fight against their Creator, from whom their strength comes, and against whom their strength cannot prevail! Oh that men could see how industrious they are to keep up misery, and to keep out happiness! The eye of man, in the fallen and corrupt estate, cannot see aright; and misseeing, how can he choose but misaim and misact? And misaiming and misacting, how can he attain his end? But the Lord's counsel shall stand, and he will fulfil all his pleasure in every heart throughout the earth. Happy is he who is weaned from himself, and begotten in the light of life, which is incorruptible; he shall stand and be blessed, when all flesh falls before the breath of the Lord, and becomes miserable; and the fall of all the fleshly will, wisdom, and strength hastens apace; happy is he who is delivered from them before the day of their ruin! which is nearer than man is aware of, or can believe.

CONCERNING

PERSECUTION.

Because men generally, in persecuting, know not what they do (neither whom it is they persecute, nor how they sin against God therein, nor what danger they are exposing themselves to, and what misery they are drawing upon themselves thereby, both in this world and for ever), even as Christ said concerning the Jews, who were persecuting him even to death, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do:" and afterward to Saul; "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Therefore, in love to those who are at unawares running into this great error, that they may find the good hand of God stopping them therein for their own good, are these things following concerning persecution written, wherein are manifested,

1. What it is that is persecuted.
2. Who it is that persecutes, or is the persecutor.
3. The nature of persecution.
4. The grounds or causes of persecution.
5. The ways and means of persecution.
6. The ends of persecuting; what men aim at therein, or rather what the spirit in men, which puts them upon persecuting of others, aims at thereby.
7. The color, or false pretence, of the persecuting spirit.
8. The blessedness of the persecuted.
9. The misery of the perseeutors.
10. The way and means whereby men may come to avoid this great evil of persecuting others.

Whereunto, in the last place, are added, *Some sad effects of persecution*; to kindle in men a desire of avoiding so great an evil in itself, and so pernicious an enemy to all that is good in general, and particularly to the peace and welfare of mankind, as the persecuting spirit is.

1. What or who it is that is persecuted.

The persecuted in all ages is that "which is born after God's Spirit." Gal. iv. 29. He that is new-created in Christ Jesus, who is formed in the image and by the Spirit of God (which is contrary to the image and spirit of the world), and who follows Christ in the leadings and teachings of his Spirit (which is out of, and contrary to, the course, fashions, ways, and customs of the world), this is the man that is persecuted in all ages. He that is of another spirit and principle than the world, and so cannot be as the world is (being made otherwise by God), nor walk as the world walks, nor worship as the world worships, being taught and required of God to do otherwise; this is the man who is afflicted, reproached, hated, hunted, persecuted. And so the apostle lays it down not only as a thing to be in his age, but in after ages also. 2. Tim. iii. 12. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Men may talk of Christ, profess Christ, worship Christ according to the way that is set up in nations, and avoid persecution; but come under the new principle, come into his life, live godly in him, become really subject unto the power and direction of his Spirit, then there is no longer avoiding of persecution. That which comes into the life of Christ comes presently into a proportion of suffering from that which is contrary to his life.

2. What or who it is that persecuteth, or is the persecutor.

The persecutor, in all ages, is that which is after the flesh. That spirit and principle in man which is from beneath, puts the men in whom it is, upon persecuting the other principle, and the persons in whom it appears. Or more plainly thus: that which is of the world, that which loves the world, and present state thereof; that which lies in the darkness, is in unity with it, loveth it, and the corrupt ways thereof; that hates the light, and persecuteth the children of the light, who are witnesses against, and reprovers of the darkness. John iii. 20. "He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit." So it was formerly, so it is also now, saith the apostle. Gal. iv. 29. Now there are several sorts and ranks of these; as some in the way of open profaneness and wickedness, some more civilized, and of a more gentle, noble, and considerate spirit and temper, some more religious and devout in worships (though not rightly principled and guided, but turned aside to some inventions or other of the earthly spirit, all which are pleasing to the earthly spirit), but all these, though they are different one from another, and agree not well among themselves, but are full of dislikes one toward another; yet they all agree in this; to wit, in a willingness to have that persecuted and subjected which is of a contrary spirit and nature to them all. They are all against this more or less; though not all against it in the same degree of heat and vehemency.

3. THE NATURE OF PERSECUTION, OR WHAT IT IS TO PERSECUTE.

Persecution is the opposition of the flesh against the Spirit. The fretting or dashing of the earthly spirit, or spirit of man corrupted, against that which is born of God: the fighting of the unregenerate and unrenewed spirit in man, against the spirit of man renewed by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God: the fighting, the opposing of this spirit against the other, is persecution. Whatever any man does in his own will, according to his own wisdom, and after the inclination of his own heart, against another who desires to fear the Lord (who waits on him for the counsel and guidance of his Spirit, that he might obey and worship him aright), is persecution. The principle of God teaches to fear the Lord; not according to the fear which is taught by the precepts of men, but according to the fear which God puts into the heart. It teaches likewise to worship the Lord, not according as man invents and thinks good to prescribe, but as the Lord instructs and requires. It teaches likewise not to conform to the world, but to deny it, and come out of it. Now the hating, opposing, and punishing of that which is taught, because of these teachings, and its obedience thereto, this is persecution. The rising of the heart against such, is persecution in the heart. The reproaching, scoffing at, or speaking evil of such, is persecution with the tongue. (So Ishmael's mocking of Isaac Gen. xxi. 9, 10. is called persecuting of him. Gal. iv. 29, 30.) The smiting, fining, imprisoning of such, &c., in relation to any thing that they do from this principle, is persecution with the hand, or lifting up of the power, either of a particular person, or of a magistrate, against such.

4. The grounds of persecution, or what are the things that cause the one spirit and principle to persecute, and the other to be persecuted.

The grounds and causes which expose the one to persecution, and kindle the heat of persecuting in the other, are chiefly these three ensuing.

1. The enmity of the birth of the flesh against the birth of the Spirit. There is enmity in the serpent against the woman, and in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman. That which is born of the corrupt principle cannot endure that which is born of the pure principle. That which walks and worships in the will, and according to the inventions of man's wisdom, and in shadows and fleshly forms, pleasing to the flesh, cannot endure that which worships in Spirit and truth.

2. The contrariety of that which is born of God, and drawn out of the world, to that which is of the flesh, or of corrupt man, and left in the world, this is that which increaseth and draweth forth the enmity in the corrupt principle. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," John xvii. 16. "therefore the world hateth them." ver. 14. They are of another spirit, of another image, of another make, of another heart, of another desire, of another manner of carriage and demeanor, of another principle, and have other ends in all they do, than the world. And their whole course and conversation being in the light, and in the love, and in true purity of mind, reprove the world, which lies in the darkness, and in the enmity, and walks in the wickedness. And how can the world bear this; in the midst of all their height, glory, and greatness, to be continually reproved by a poor and contemptible generation, as God's choice in the world have, for the generality of them, always been; even looked upon by the world as the off-scouring thereof, as not fit to be suffered to have a being in it, but rather as deserving to be scoured off from it?

The light, whereof the children of light are born, and which they hold forth, or rather which God holds forth by them, condemns the world. The evenness, sweetness, and straitness of their conversation and practices, condemn the unevenness, crookedness, and perverseness of the spirit of the world. The integrity, seriousness, and spirituality of their worship, with the living presence and power of God appearing among them, condemn the deadness, formality, and hypocrisy of the worships of the world; who draw nigh to God with their lips, when it is manifest that their hearts are far from him, being ensnared and captivated with vanities and self-interests, and love of the world and earthly things. Indeed the whole course and manifestation of the light and power of God in them is a continual upbraiding of the principle and ways of darkness in the men of the world. And how can the men of the world forbear making an unrighteous war, even a war of persecution, against that which invades their territories, and makes war with them in righteousness? Can darkness choose but fight to save its own dominions? It must put out the light, or it cannot save its own, but will be losing of ground daily.

3. Because of the children of light leaving and coming out of the world. They were once of the world, as well as others; of the same nature, of the same spirit, of the same corrupt will, of the same corrupt wisdom, walking in their way, worshipping according to their worships, approving and observing their customs, fashions, and vanities; but when the Spirit of Christ called them out of the world, and created in them that which could hear his voice, and was willing to follow him, then they left all these, and stood witnesses (in God's Spirit which called, and in that life which was begotten in them, and in the fear, love, and power of that God who quickened them) against all these. And this made the world, in that they were once of them, but left them. Had they staid in the world, and been still of the world, the world would have loved them, as it doth the rest of its own; but departing from the world, travelling towards another country, subjecting themselves to an-

other Spirit, and testifying against that spirit which formerly led them, and still leads the world, and against those ways and practices wherein they formerly walked, and wherein the world still walks, this fills the worldly spirit with rage against them.

5. The ways and means of persecution.

The ways and means of persecution are very many. Who can want instruments to afflict the innocent and helpless, who can neither resist the evil which is offered them, nor harm that which offers it? I shall only mention here three general heads, to which many particulars may be referred.

1. One great way of persecution is by making use of laws already made, either according to their proper tendency to that end and purpose, or by bending them aside from their proper intent, to reach those whom they have a mind to afflict and persecute. Thus the Jews, when they had a mind to have Christ put to death, told Pilate, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die." John, xix. 7.

2. Another way is, by making new laws fit for their purpose, whereby they may catch, ensnare, and suppress that which is contrary to their spirit and principle, and which will not bow thereto. This is a certain way to take that which is born of God, and which cannot but be true to him, and so cannot bow to the corrupt will of man, nor to any law made in the corrupt will, to strengthen the corruption, and against the holy, pure will and mind of God. Thus Daniel and the three Children were caught in the snare by laws; Daniel, for praying to his God, against the royal statute and firm decree of the king, signed in writing according to the desire and advice of all the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, princes, counsellors, and captains, Dan. vi. 7, 8. and the three Children, for not worshipping the image Nebuchadnezzar had set up, according to the decree of the king. (Observe this by the way, and consider it well: what hath been set up all this night of the apostasy,

but images of the true worship; and what compelling hath there been thereto.) Thus have articles been framed, and statutes made, here in England, (as in King Henry the VIIIth and Queen Mary's days) which have been great engines of persecution; and thus have there been some late laws made in New-England to the same effect, though better might have justly been expected from them. And this is not only a certain way, but a very plausible way likewise, whereby the persecutor hides himself from the imputation of persecution, and appears as a just executer of the law; and so represents him who is upright before God, and innocent in the sight of God, as an offender and breaker of the law, and so justly punishable. But this will not always cover the unjust spirit's persecuting of the just. He that shall persecute the Lord of glory (as he that persecuteth the least member of his, how contemptible soever he appears to his eye, doth no less, Acts ix. 4. Mat. xxv. 40, 45.) when Christ shall call him to account therefor, it will be a vain plea for him to say, there was a law for it, and he acted according to law. It is fit for all men and laws to bow before the Lord, and not to disturb any in their obedience to the Lord, or hurt the principle of his life in any; but cherish and nurse it up as much as in them lies, in that tenderness which Christ begetteth in it, and in that spiritual liberty which Christ allows it.

3. A third way of persecution is by the hand of violence, without either law, or so much as pretence to law. Thus the persecuting spirit, when it hath power in its hand, and is out of fear, smiteth (with the open fist of wickedness) that which is an enemy to, and stands a witness against, its wickedness.

6. The ends of persecution, or what the persecuting spirit aims at in its persecuting, and would fain attain thereby.

1. The main end of persecution is to bring the children of light (who have left the evil, darkness, and corruption of the world) back to the world again. That which they persecute them for is for leaving the world, both in its principles and practiees, and for professing obedience and subjection to another spirit; that which they drive at in persecuting them is to force them back from under subjection to that spirit which hath led them out of the world, into subjection to the spirit of the world again. There is a great fight between the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world in the two seeds; the Spirit of God striving to bring the spirit of the world under, and the spirit of the world striving to bring the Spirit of God under. This is well known in the heart where the new birth is witnessed.. Oh, what striving there is by the powers of darkness, with all manner of secret temptations and forcible oppositions (so far as the Lord permits), to bring the heart (which the Lord hath begun to redeem, and in some measure set free from them) under their power again! And the same that stirs up the darkness in the heart against the seed and birth of light there, the same stirs up in the darkness in other men against it also. The Lord knows what bitter fights we have had with the enemy in our own hearts, before we could leave our principles, paths, and practices of darkness; how hard it hath been to us to deny the world, and come out of it; and yet when the Lord hath conquered and subjected the darkness in our own hearts in any measure, then we meet with a new fight abroad in the world, the same principle and power in them fighting against us, as did at first in ourselves. And as this was the aim and work of the power of darkness in ourselves (and still is, so far as any of it is left in any of us) to bring us back under the darkness again, even from the light and leadings of the Spirit, and from sin.

gle obedience thereto; so it is the aim and endeavor of the same spirit in others. And if they could but bring us back from our God into the world again, they would be at peace with us, as well as with other men, and love and cherish us, as they do the rest of the world.

2. A second end of persecution in the spirit that persecuteth is, to keep the children of light from gaining further ground. The kingdom of God and his truth is of a growing, spreading nature. It is like leaven, like salt, like the light of the morning; its nature is to leaven, to season, to overspread, and gather mankind from the evil, from the darkness, from the corruption, from the death and destruction. Now the spirit of the world, that spirit which ruleth the world, is loth to lose ground; and therefore hunts and seeks to destroy the vessels wherein the light appeareth, and from whom it shineth forth, and to make them appear as odious as it may, that it may keep all its own territories and dominions in a perfect detestation of them, and distance from them. Thus though the people of God have still been an innocent people, and simple as to the subtlety and deceit of the serpent, and weak and foolish in compare with the wise and strong ones in the worldly nature and spirit; yet they are still represented as most dangerous, most subtle, and pernicious, as shrewd deceivers, witches, Jesuits, &c., yea, any thing that is hateful and hated.

3. A third end of persecution is to afflict, grieve, vex, disturb, and torment those whose principles and practices are displeasing to them. There is enmity in the nature and spirit of the world, against the holy, pure Spirit and seed of God; and if it cannot overcome and get its will one way, in bringing back; yet it will strive to have its will another way, even in vexing and afflicting. It is the pleasure of hatred or enmity to do any thing which may hurt that against which its hatred is. Thus the evil spirit *rejoiceth in iniquity*, in grieving and afflicting that which is good. As the Spirit of love delights in love, and in doing good even to those which persecute; so the spirit of enmity delights in hatred and doing evil; even in vexing and oppressing

those which seek their good, because they are not, and cannot be, one with them in their dark principles and evil practices.

7. The color or pretence which men put upon their persecutions of that which is good.

Persecution is so hateful (and hath such a blackness of spirit in it) that it cannot endure to appear in its own color. Where is the man that would appear to persecute that which is good in men, or men because of their goodness? Therefore all persecutors, though they still persecute that which is good, and those which are good; yet they still represent and charge them as evil, that they might thereby hide the badness and unjustness of their persecutions from their own eyes, and from the eyes of others. Thus the true prophets of the Lord were always misrepresented by their persecutors, even as false prophets, as "troublers of Israel," as madmen, as men not fit to be tolerated in the kingdom or commonwealth of Israel. See Jer. xxix. 26, 27. And those which condemned their forefathers for persecuting the true prophets in former days, yet could also persecute the true prophets in their own days. When Christ himself asked the Jews for which of his good works they stoned him? they said "Not for a good work," or *as a good man;* but *for his doing evil;* for his *blasphemy;* in that he, *being a man, would make himself God.* John x. 32, 33. And the Pharisees did not represent him as a good man, as a holy teacher from God, (as indeed he was, though his doctrine and conversation differed very much from theirs) but as a deceiver, a seducer of the people, a mean man, the son of Joseph the carpenter, one whom none of the wise scribes owned, but only such silly people as knew not the law, John vii. 49. yea, as a very bad man, as one that was against the worship and ordinances of Moses, against God's temple and priests in his doctrine and principles, and a profaner of God's holy sabbath in his practices; yea, more than this,

they represented him as a man that had a devil, and that he was able to do such great things beyond them through Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Could the Jews think they did otherwise than well in desiring such a man as this to be put to death? Might they not well prefer Barabbas before a man thus represented by their chief priests and teachers, who knew and could expound the law, and were best able to judge, as they might well think, both what was the truth, and who were deceivers?

8. The blessedness of the persecuted.

The disciple of Christ, who is persecuted for conscience' sake, who suffers from men and their laws for the uprightness of his heart towards, and for his obedience unto, Christ, that man is precious in the eye of Christ, and hath his blessing with him; yea, the more men disesteem and hate him upon this account the greater is his blessedness. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." Mat. v. 11, 12. He is blessed in several respects.

1. That man is in that spirit, and in that way, which God hath chosen, and so he is in a happy state and condition at present. He is in the path of life, in the way of peace, under the leadings of God's Spirit. The world loveth and cherisheth that which is its own, and walketh with it; but is at enmity and war with that which is of God. Therefore the world's dislike, enmity, and persecution are an evidence of God's choice, and of a removal from it towards God. It is a happy thing in the eye of man to be at unity with the world, to have the love and friendship thereof, to have all men speak well of one, to be found doing that which is pleasing in the eye of the world, and to be enjoying the pleasures and profits thereof; but in the eye of God it is happy to be in unity with that which is contrary to the world, and procureth its ill-will. "Love

not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father," which begetteth out of the world, "is not in him." But he that loseth the love of the world, for the principle of God, and his subjection thereto, is in that which the Father loveth, and feeleth the love of the Father opened in him, and revealed to him; and this is truly a happy state.

2. The recompense which God will give to them in the world to come, who cleave to him and his truth, for all the persecutions which they endure in this world for his truth's sake, is exceeding great. "Great is your reward in heaven." Mat. v. 14. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment," but at most for the time of this world, "worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 17.

3. The reward is great in this world also. There is a hundred-fold recompense to be reaped in this life. The peace of God in the conscience, the presence of God, the life of God, the virtue of God, the glory of the Spirit of God, which accompanieth, resteth with, and abideth on, the heart which is faithful, and waiteth upon God for patience, meekness, innocency, and strength to carry through sufferings, may well be valued at above a hundred-fold income and recompense for all the hardships and tribulations which are undergone for his name's sake. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." 1 Pet. iv. 14.

9. The grievous misery of the persecutors.

It is a miserable thing to be deceived about that which is good; to put good for evil, light for darkness, sweet for bitter, and so, under a mistake at least, become a persecutor of the good. All good is of God, and he that is against good is against God; and it is a dreadful thing for the creature to set himself in battle against his Creator, and to engage the power and wrath of the Omnipotent One against him; though while the eye is shut, it doth not appear to

men either that they are against God, or that their danger is so great thereby as indeed it is. The children of God are as the apple of his eye. Who can touch them, and he not be deeply sensible? Yea, and they are most dear to God in that for which the world most persecutes them; and therefore their danger and misery must needs be great; which may further appear in these three respects:

1. In respect of the weight of wrath which their persecutions of others here will bring upon themselves in the world to come: then every hard word, with every thing they have done against any lamb of Christ's, shall come upon them. There is a time of judgment for all that is sowed in this world, and then every one shall reap what he hath sowed. And if he that hath not visited the sick and imprisoned for Christ's sake shall hear that sentence, "Go ye cursed," &c., what will his portion be who hath imprisoned them, and caused their sickness? Now is our time of trouble; but the Lord hath prepared a day of rest for that spirit which is troubled in this world by the spirit of this world; and then shall the troublesome spirit, which troubled the peaceable spirit, and would give it no rest in its following and obeying the Lord, be troubled by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Thes. i. 6, 7. And what shall the misery of that spirit be, whom the Spirit of the Lord troubleth and filleth with anguish and torments, in his fire, and with his brimstone! Oh that men would awaken, and consider in time, and not sell away their everlasting inheritance for a mess of vanity, and transitory lusts and pleasures.

2. The hand of God doth often overtake them in this world, and the Lord doth many times curse their very blessings to them, insomuch as they cannot enjoy the world with that sweetness and content they might, were it not for the rage and bitterness of their spirits against God's people, and their provoking of God against them thereby. How many of his own people did Pharaoh lose, and how did he break the strength and glory of his kingdom, by persecuting God's Israel of old? How did Amalek cause his name to be rooted out from under heaven? How did the nations and

mighty powers of the earth fall upon this account, one after another? And in this nation how many powers have already fallen thereby? *Jerusalem is a burdensome stone* (it was so in the type, it is much more so in the substance), which lies in the way of every earthly spirit and power; which they know not how to build with, neither can they rear up their own building because of it, and therefore every power strives to remove it out of their way; but they know not the weight of it, nor who it is that hath squared it, and how firm it is fixed upon the rock. The earthly spirit is never to enjoy any true or lasting peace and settlement (which is the gift of God) until it leave off persecuting God's Israel (which are the people whom God calleth out of the world), and leave them free for God to enjoy, command, and dispose of; and whatever holds Israel in bondage, either within or without, must either be subject to the Lord, or be broken by that arm of power which the Lord putteth forth to redeem Israel with.

3. By all their persecutions and afflictions they shall but increase and cause to grow that which they strive to suppress. This is misery indeed for a man to hazard his soul eternally, and his peace and prosperity in this world, to crush and suppress a people, and yet not be able to effect that neither, but even thereby occasion their growth and increase; and yet so it is in the day that God putteth forth his hand to redeem Israel. The ways that man takes to bring them back into captivity shall be the means of perfecting their redemption. "Come (said Pharoah) this people multiply too fast: they grow more and mightier than we; let us deal wisely with them, and keep them down by hard labor, lest they grow over-numerous, and join with our enemies against us, when they see their advantage." But they grew and spread the more, upon his wise plotting and contriving to diminish them. And what did he get by striving to keep them from going forth of his land and idolatrous worships to worship the Lord aright, but plagues and judgments upon himself and his people from the Lord? Can the powers of the earth withstand God any more now

than they could formerly? Shall he not redeem and bring forth his people from the land of Babylon? His spiritual Israel from spiritual Egypt? Shall he not break the antichristian yoke from their consciences, that they may be free in spirit to serve the Lord? Can any hinder God from breathing his Spirit upon people, and from begetting them in the image and likeness of his Spirit unto himself? And shall not these be the Lord's? Shall not the same Spirit teach them to worship the Lord? Shall God call them to worship him openly, and shall they not obey him, but worship him according to man's inventions and commandments, or not at all publicly? O ye sons of men! be wise; do not contend with the Lord; be not bewitched by the cup of fornications from the pure, spiritual worship of the living God into man's inventions, which the Lord's soul loathes; nor do not strive to hold any back from the Lord, whom the Lord draws after him; but consider his power, wait to know his work in the world, and do not intrench upon his dominions, but be thankful for and content with your own; and do not provoke him against you, who can more easily take yours from you than ye can his from him. And consider this watch-word, in that which can open and show the truth of it; *the Lord hath put forth his arm to recover his possessions from out of the hands of antichrist*; and who shall be able to force it back again, to make it return into his bosom, without effecting what he stretched it forth for?

Therefore, O magistrates of this nation! do not make use of the sword to suppress the plants of God; but to cut down that which manifestly is not of God. Look abroad throughout this nation; behold how much evil there is to grieve and provoke the Lord, and to divert good from the nation, and to bring wrath upon it, and the government thereof; strike at that in righteous and true judgment, and with mercy to creatures' souls and bodies. But that which certainly is of God, meddle not with; and that which may be of God for aught ye know, be circumspect in meddling with, lest ye engage God against you. It were better to let many tares grow, than to pluck up one ear of corn. Christ hath

absolutely expressed it to be his mind, that he would not have that done which may so much as hazard the plucking up of an ear of corn. Mat. xiii. 29. But oh, how are the laws and governments of this world to be lamented over! And oh, what need there is of their reformation, whose common work it is to pluck up the ears of corn, and leave the tares standing! The chief cause of this misery (from whence it principally ariseth) is men's meddling with those things which God has reserved for himself, and assaying to do that carnally which God did spiritually, and will do spiritually again, in his due time, when he hath sufficiently shown how untoward and improper man's hand is to effect it. The Christians in the apostles' days were "of one heart, and one mind," which proceeded from the power and work of God upon them; and then they soon came into one way and worship; but men will have unity and uniformity in a way of religion and worship before there is one heart and one mind. Now this is contrary to the Spirit of God, and to the very nature of religion, and the cause of much cruelty upon men's consciences: and this hath been and will be the constant effect of it, even the crushing, as much as lies in man, of that which is tender, and of and for God, and the increasing of that which is formal, dead, and earthly. Now if ever Christ appointed or intended such a church-government, which naturally produceth this effect, let all that fear God, and are of sober spirits, judge.

10. The way and means to avoid persecution.

Where is the man (in whom there is any good, who hath any love to goodness and righteousness, who hateth cruelty and oppression over men's outward liberties and estates, and much more over the consciences of people) that could not with his heart desire to have this grand enemy removed, both from particular persons, and also from governors, and governments, that peace and settlement might be known; righteousness reaped; all cruelty and hardness in

one man towards another removed; and there be *no more complaining in our streets;* either because of *oppressions from men*, or fear of *wrath from God*, upon those governments which oppress? And who would not earnestly pray to God for the discovery of that way and those means, and be very industrious in the use of them, whereby this persecuting spirit and temper might be wasted and dried up in him? Now the way and means whereby the persecuting spirit may be subdued, are divers; As,

1. *By a true awe and fear of God in the heart.* The fear of God teacheth to depart from iniquity, and to seek the crucifying and bringing under of the worldly spirit in a man's self, and to wait daily to have God's will revealed, and likewise to be made obedient thereunto. Now he that is in this temper of spirit, will hardly be drawn to persecute another, but rather rejoice to see a tenderness of spirit in him, and true subjection of heart to what he believes to be the mind and will of God; and dares not so much as judge him for differing, either in apprehensions or practices, about worship, much less persecute him therefore. But that man who is of a profane spirit, or comes easily by his religion, even by the wisdom, industry, and parts of a man, and not by the gift of God, and is exercised in that fear of God which is taught by the precepts of men, but knoweth not that fear which God puts in the heart (from whence the true religion and worship springs), either of these may be drawn to persecute; yea, indeed, it will be hard for either of them to abstain therefrom.

2. *By a meekness of spirit.* The gospel makes meek, tender, gentle, peaceable; fills with love and sweetness of spirit; teaches to love, to forgive, to pray for and bless enemies: and how shall this man persecute? Can a lamb persecute? Can a dove persecute? Indeed a wolf in sheep's clothing may raven and devour, but a true sheep cannot. As the power of the gospel is known, the devouring and persecuting nature is destroyed; and that being taken away, persecution soon comes to an end.

3. *By a sober and patient consideration of their cause whom*

they persecute, and what it is in themselves which moves them to persecute them. The strength of persecution lies in the darkness, in the dark thoughts, misjudgings, and misapprehensions about him whom one persecutes, or is inclined to persecute; in prejudices and false judgments of persons and things received; which, by a sober hearing and considering of things in God's fear and in meekness, might be removed; and then the eager, persecuting heat of spirit would soon abate and fall, the fuel, which kindled it, being taken away. "The Jews stopped their ears, and ran upon Stephen." Acts vii. 57. This is the way of persecuting spirits; they take in prejudices against persons, their principles and practices, stop their ears against what may be said to manifest either the equity of the thing in itself, or their mistake about it, and then run headlong in their fury of persecuting and devouring. But he that is sober and considerate, and weighs the cause before he engages against it, and observes what it is in him which moves so hotly against another, and which is so ready to believe ill aforehand; he shall soon see that, which is always hid from the eye of the persecutor, and find water to cast on this devouring fire of spirit in him.

4. *By a righteous frame of spirit, which is willing to do by another, as he would be done to in the like case.* Persecution ariseth from unrighteousness and selfishness; righteousness and true equity would soon end it. If no man would make another man's conscience bow by force, who would not have his own so bowed, persecution would soon cease. But this is the great evil and unrighteousness of man; whoever is uppermost, thinks he hath a right to bow all the rest under him, and looks upon them as guilty and offenders, if their consciences do not yield and bow under him. And he that newly complained of the load laid on his conscience by others, yet if he can get ease and power into his hand, is presently laying a load upon others. Here is a wrong frame of spirit within, and how can it choose but bring forth injury and persecution outwardly?

5. *By taking heed and watching against the corrupt and carnal principle, with the reasonings, self-ends, and interests thereof, and*

hearkening to the principle of God, which teacheth and speaketh right reason. Man as he came from God, and was by especial favor formed in his image, so it pleased God to place in him a principle of his own life to govern him. This image was defaced by the fall, and this principle forfeited, yet for Christ's sake (who is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe) the Lord stirreth up and visiteth all mankind more or less, by the pure eternal principle of his own light and life in Christ. In hearkening to this, man's reason is rectified, purified, and preserved pure; and his steps here are safe. But consulting and contriving out of this, he meets with that which corrupts him (captivating and misbiasing his reason); and then all his intents, designs, and contrivances become corrupt, and tend not only towards the prejudice of others at present, but also to his own loss and detriment in the issue. He therefore that would be safe in the enjoyment of any blessing which he hath received from God, and faithful in doing him service in his generation, must know what of himself is ready to betray him, that he may watch against it, and turn from it; and what in himself is given him of God to enlighten, guide, instruct, and preserve him, that he may hearken thereto, and be made happy thereby.

11. And lastly, To set it yet more home upon all that are ingenuous, and would be worthy and noble, and do that which is worthy and noble, abhorring cruelty, afflicting and oppressing of others; let them consider *the fruits and effects of persecution*, which are very many, and of the worst kind, even suitable to the nature of the root. At present I shall only mention these four.

1. In a great degree, *It hindereth the growth of the present good, in every age and generation*, so far as the earthly power or sword of the magistrate can well hinder. Persecution of that which is good by the earthly powers, in its proper tendency, is an hindrance to the growth thereof in their age and day; though the Lord can overbear the malignity of it, and further the growth of his seed thereby.

2. *It wholly tends towards hindering the shooting up of any*

further seeds of good, which God hath to sow in the earth. For all the seeds of good which God hath to sow in the earth, at first they are looked upon as evil; until by God's blessing upon them, and opening of men's eyes through the much suffering of those vessels, in whom God causeth the most excellent seeds of his virtue and goodness first to appear, their innocency and beauty begin at length to shine in men's eyes, and be discerned.

3. *It occasioneth the growth of evil.* For good with-standeth, opposeth, and chaseth away evil, even as light doth darkness; and therefore the preventing of the springing up of the good, is a cherishing and strengthening of the evil. Besides, the same spirit, government, or power, which persecuteth and keepeth down the good, under a pretence of its being evil, cannot choose but also cherish and nurse up the evil, under a pretence of its being good. For the same eye, tongue, and heart, that seeth, calleth, and acknowledgeth that which is indeed good to be evil, cannot choose but also mistake the evil and think it good.

4. *It draweth down the wrath of God upon people, powers, and governments,* where such persecution is; where evil is cherished under a pretence of its being good, and the good endeavored to be suppressed under a pretence of its being evil. If men from their hearts do acknowledge the being of God, and his disposal of things; then surely what is truly good in persons or nations is of him; and what is of him, his eye is upon. He beholdeth the plants which he hath planted in the earth, and the plants which the envious one hath planted; and he cannot bless that place, that people, those powers, that government, where his plants are crushed, under a pretence of their not being his, and where the evil nature and plants are cherished as if they were the good.

Therefore he that would not be an enemy to God, an enemy to goodness, an enemy to himself, an enemy to mankind, and a friend and promoter of evil, let him wait on the Lord, for the fear of his name and power to be written on his heart, and for a meek, righteous frame of spirit, &c., that he may consider his steps, and the reasonings of his

mind, and not mistake evil for good, and good for evil, and so persecute men for being and doing that, which (might it have its course and progress) would make the world happy.

Obj. But will not this undermine magistracy, and interrupt its punishing of evil-doers, if they should be thus tender and considerate? For what man cannot pretend conscience for what he does? And if the magistrate should hearken to every pretence of conscience, the laws would soon be silent, government at a stand, and every one do what they list, bringing in all manner of licentiousness and disobedience to authority, under a pretence of conscience.

Ans. 1. Conscience is of God; and tenderness and conscientiousness towards him is necessary to the receiving of his pure fear, and towards the springing up and growth of all good in the heart. The seed of good is tender; and if it be not received into tender and well prepared earth, but into thorny, stony, or highway ground, it cannot grow. And it cannot reasonably be supposed to be the intent of God in appointing governments, that ever their laws and authority should hurt that tenderness of conscience, wherein his seeds of good are sown.

2. It is true; the corrupt nature of man, which is selfish, and seeketh covers for evil, may also seek this cover to hide iniquity under, and may pretend conscience, when there is no matter of conscience at all, but self-will and self-ends at bottom.

3. Notwithstanding this, God would not have the true conscientiousness and tenderness in any of his crushed; nor can it be done by any person, authority, or law, without provoking God on the one hand, or without injury to such who are so dealt with, viz: who are punished by man for the exercise of that conscientiousness which is of God, and which he requireth, and is pleasing to him.

4. It were far better in itself, safer for governors, more agreeable to equity and righteous government, and more pleasing to God and good men, rather to suffer some, by their craft and false covers, to escape due punishment, than to punish those who, by the goodness, innocency, and right-

eousness which God hath planted in them, are exempted from punishment. Yea, it were better and much safer to spare many evil men, than to punish one good man: for mercy and sparing, even of offenders, is natural to that which is good; but severity and punishments are unnatural and but for necessity's sake. And as for that man, who, by his subtlety and deceit, thus escapes man's hand, he will be no great gainer; for God, who is above all, will be sure to meet with him. Yea, that magistrate, who spares some evil and evildoers, merely upon this account,—lest he should hurt that which is good, the Lord will help and bless; whereas, that power and government which wilfully errs herein, the Lord may soon cut down; and that which errs thus through mistake (it being a grievous mistake to cut down the good instead of the evil), the Lord, who loveth the good and hateth the evil, may easily be provoked against.

5. As government came from God; so the righteous execution of it depends upon God. Every man needs God's help daily, else he may easily err in his course; and governments and governors need God's help much more, in the many intricacies and perplexities which they often meet with. And God is nigh to them in their difficult cases, who wait upon him for counsel and direction. If the case be knotty, yet if God give wisdom, hath the magistrate cause to complain? And will not God assist that magistrate, who in his fear waits on him, and is not willing to spare the evil, and afraid to hurt the good? If there were not so much consulting with man's wisdom and policy, nor such laying of designs and intents at first, as spring from man, and not from God, but a naked, upright waiting on him for instruction, who can only guide the spirit of man aright, governments would not prove so difficult, nor the success therein so dangerous.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THAT STIFFNESS, RESOLVEDNESS, AND SUPPOSED STUBBORNNESS, WHICH BY MANY IS OBJECTED AGAINST THE PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS.

Obj. THAT the people called Quakers are an innocent and industrious people, that they aim at good, and might be serviceable and profitable to the nation in many respects; this many believe concerning them, and in their hearts wish that the powers would let them alone, and make a trial of them; the which they might be the more inclined to do, were it not for a certain stiffness which appears in them, they being so glued to their principles and practices, that they will not bend in the least, nor so much as meet the magistrate one jot in any favor he would show unto them. This is such a temper as no magistrate or governor can bear, and therefore there is a necessity either of banishing or suppressing them one way or other.

Ans. I freely confess, that (looking upon them with man's eye) it may easily appear so to man, who cannot see either whence that is, or what that is, which is wrought in their hearts by God. And how can I blame others for judging thus of them, when I myself should be liable so to judge, if I did so look upon them? But yet, if I had patience to hear them, and to consider the thing in the fear of God (watching against that wisdom, from which the knowledge of the things of God and the state of his people is hid), I see also, that there is some ground may appear unto man, to let him see that this is not such a stiffness and stubbornness of spirit as he judgeth, but ariseth from, and necessarily accompanieth, a true tenderness and conscientiousness towards God; which to make the more manifest to such as are willing fairly to consider the thing, and know the truth thereof, I shall thus demonstrate.

1. Stubbornness, or such a kind of stiffness and resolvedness, ariseth from the strength and corruption of the natural will and earthly wisdom. The wisdom which is from above is gentle, easy to be entreated; and the will which is

created by God is mild and flexible, and easy to be led by the least child, in the line of goodness. And I can truly say this, that I never in my whole course and conversation (who have long been a spectator and uninterested person, both as relating to the civil state and the various professions of religion, till the power of truth and presence of God appearing in this people drew my heart after them), yea, I cannot but say, in the singleness of my heart, I never met with a more mild, gentle, flexible-spirited people. And he that can reach the ground of the thing, cannot but see it to be thus; for he that is daily exercised in denying his will and wisdom; he on whose back the Lord lays the cross, and crucifies him every day, his self-will and self-wisdom, with all the conceitedness and stiffness which arise therefrom, must needs be much broken in him.

2. In the tenderness and pliableness to good, which God begets, there is, and cannot but be, an unbendedness to evil. Consider this, O ye that are wise! In the birth which God begets in the heart; in the immortal seed of life, which God hath sown, and causeth to spring up in his heritage, there is a bowing to God at every appearance of good, accompanied with a tenderness, gentleness, and good-will to man: but it cannot bow to that which is evil in any man upon the face of the earth. Read then this riddle, with a true understanding: the tender one cannot yield, the flexible one cannot bow; but naturally standeth upright and straight towards God, even in every thing it hath learned of him, and which he requireth of it. Thus in the apostles' days, the Christians, though meek, though sweet, though pliable to the Spirit of God, and to all good, yet could not bow to so much as an appearance of evil anywhere, but shun and avoid it everywhere. And if it were not for this kind of stiffness and unbendedness, the children of God could never be preserved in their departure out of the world's spirit, ways, worships, and practices; but would soon be ensnared and drawn back again, by the enticements and subtleties of the worldly nature, either in themselves or others.

3. A stiffness then I grant, an unbendedness I grant; but

not of the earthly, not of the self-will, nor according to the earthly; but such as ariseth from truth in the heart, and from tenderness of spirit towards God; such as is begotten in his fear, preserved by his power, and is necessary towards their preservation who are born of him, and called by him out of the world. And if those, who are apt and liable to misjudge of them, did but see the sincere desire of their hearts not to offend man, but to be subject to the utmost according to the will of God, and knew what breathings there are in their hearts to God (in relation to the magistrate, and when they appear before him), that they may be preserved in the pure fear, and in righteousness and inoffensiveness, and how they cannot but refuse to break any of God's commands, because he is their Supreme Lord, and they dare not disobey him to please man, or avoid their own sufferings from man: I say, if men did see this, surely they would not call it stubbornness and self-willedness, but a pure subjection and denial of the self-will in God's fear, joined with a holy and humble boldness in his power.

4. Let it be equally considered, and it will soon be acknowledged, That the least thing which God requires (the command being from so great a King, upon whom the soul hath so great dependence, from whom it hath so great hopes, and to whom universal obedience is so due in itself, and so profitable to the creature) is exceeding weighty; and it is impossible for the fear of him, and due tenderness towards his commands, to be preserved, without a strict and close giving up the will to him, and standing in his strength, strong and unbended against all temptations, provocations, allurements, and affrightments to the contrary (and how easily may men call this stubbornness and stiffness!). But this they receive from God, as well as the law of obedience and power to obey; and this (which men call stubbornness) flows in upon them from him, when they are in the sweetest and meekest frame of spirit, most ready to deny themselves, and to yield up their own wills to whatsoever is good and righteous, and so of God.

5. The same thing which is offended at this unbended-

ness and resolvedness, which is wrought and preserved in them by the fear of God (calling it, by way of reproach, stiffness and stubbornness); I say, the very same thing will commend that resolution and stiffness, which is taken up in man's wisdom, and held in man's will. Is it not good to weigh and consider things reasonably, and then to choose and hold fast those principles which appear most reasonable? What man, but will say it is? And is it not good to obey and keep to that light which is higher than reason; which comprehends reason, rectifying and preserving it, making it profitable and serviceable to God who made it, to the vessel in which it is, and to the rest of the creation? But "wisdom is justified of her children." He that knows not the principle of the eternal light, who is not born of it (much less by unfeigned obedience and subjection formed into it), he cannot justify it in his paths; but he justifies the earthly wisdom and reason of man, by its setting up *appearances of good*, instead of *good*, and would make all acknowledge and bow to them as *good*; whereas that which is indeed acquainted with the *good*, living in the principle thereof, cannot bow to the false appearance, but only to the truth itself. When man's spirit and wisdom is wearied out of all its paths, and he broken with the misery which will certainly overtake him therein; at last the path of God will be welcome to him, and that principle which, through the operation of God, is able to rectify him and make him happy.

There hath long been a peace and prosperity throughout the world in unrighteousness; but the season is at length come for the breaking thereof, and now there is not to be such a settled, false peace in unrighteousness any longer: but tribulation, anguish, and destruction are coming upon the selfish and unjust spirit; and he that refuseth the path of righteousness, must not know peace, but be overtaken with the overflowing scourge, and swept into and shut up in the pit, which hath long been digging for the wicked; Psa. xciv. 13. and mark this thing following, ye that would not find yourselves deceived of your souls hereafter,

nor of your outward peace and prosperity here; for it deeply concerns both.

The Spirit of the Lord once raised up a spiritual building, which the spirit of the dragon overturned (as to its outward state, though the gates of hell could not prevail against the being and inward state of the true church) and instead thereof set up an earthly image, agreeable to the earthly spirit in nations, but burthensome to that which is innocent, pure, and spiritual. The Lord God suffered this to stand all its allotted time, and to have power to keep down the visibility of his truth and people; but the Lord hath appointed a season to raise up his own building again, and to throw down this image. Now this I say to all men, in the fear and dread of the Almighty, stand still and mark, if all the power of man be able to keep down God's spiritual building which he is raising up; or to keep up any part of the earthly image which he is throwing down. The spirit of man (in various ways) hath shown what it judgeth best to have down, and to have up; and hath put forth its strength to accomplish its will and counsel. Stand still a while, and ye shall see, that the spirit of the Lord will also show what he would have down, and what he would have up; and he will also put forth his strength, to accomplish his will and counsel. It is the glory and honor of the Lord to carry on his work in the midst of all the oppositions of man, and against the full current of his strength and will. This will make it to appear to be of God, and cause the glory of his name to shine. Oh that men could fear the Lord, and bow before him, that he might be honored in them, and see good to honor them in the carrying on of his work, and so might not be forced (through their hearkening to the dark spirit, and because of their ignorance of, and disobedience to, the light of his Spirit) to get himself a name, by overturning their strength and counsels, and causing his glory to shine over them!

We have been a poor, oppressed people, from the day that the power of the Lord broke forth upon us, and his light sprang in us, even until now: and now we are brought

lower than ever, and are in greater danger (to the eye of man) than ever. Yet our confidence is still in our God; and this we are certain of, that our principle (and practices therefrom) shall stand, and man shall not be able to prevail against it; for God will preserve his people in his life and power, and the heads of all that wait upon him in his fear, shall be lifted up above all the swellings of the waters; yea, a song of praise is already prepared in the heart of God's chosen, against the day of his deliverance. We look not out, but give up our backs to the smiter, as if their strokes were never to have an end; and yet we wait on our God, and hope in him, as if deliverance were springing up every moment. And oh that God would smite the spirit of enmity and darkness in men and powers! And then there would be love, peace, pursuing after God and righteousness, and no more *persecuting* and *smiting* of God's people for the uprightness of their hearts, and for their obedience and faithfulness to him. But be it known throughout all the earth, we are the Lord's, and we must worship and serve him. He hath redeemed us (even all of us in some measure, who have known unity with his living truth) in soul, in body, and spirit; and they must all be his in the first place, and cannot bow to man in the least, against his will, or contrary to the law of his pure life, and leadings of his Spirit in the heart. Here is our standing, in the strength of our God, whatever become of us. And here we stand in love and good-will to mankind; yea, to these present powers, however they judge of us; and have been praying for them, and mourning over them, while they have been smiting of us. And when they have drawn the hand of the Lord upon themselves, if the Lord shall please to open their eyes to see what we have been towards them, and how fain we would have had them set footing there, where they might have stood firm and have been preserved, they will bewail as much their dealings with us, as what will befall themselves. The Lord will manifest all things in his time, and give his truth a passage in the earth, and his people a quiet

habitation therein, how black soever the face of things now appears, as relating to them.

Oh! how happy will the day be, when the Lord shall have wrought down the selfish spirit in man, and shall have raised up his own noble and equal principle! Then shall righteousness spring up and spread abroad throughout the nations; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

SOME

DIRECTIONS

TO THE

PANTING SOUL,

Which hath long been travelling in the Letter, but hath not yet been acquainted with the Power, nor hardly so much as entered into the Ministration of the endless Life (which is the Ministration of the GOSPEL), that it may feel the Spring, and come to drink there of the living Waters.

"COME unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Mat. xi. 28, 29, 30.

Some sweet meditations sprang in my heart concerning this portion of scripture; with breathings of spirit for, and rollings of bowels towards, those "that labor and are heavy laden," which I find drawings to communicate.

1. *In the gospel* (which is "the power of God unto salvation") *is the soul's rest.* It is the doctrine of the kingdom, wherein is life, joy, peace, and everlasting rest to the soul in God. The law had the shadow of the good things to come; but under it was not the possession of the good things themselves, but only a laboring after them, and a mourning and load because of the want of them: but in the gospel is the substance, the enjoyment; life and immortality are there brought to light, and an entrance ministered into the everlasting kingdom, where they are felt, possessed, and enjoyed. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," saith the forerunner; It is come, saith the Messiah;

and in it there is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the pure spirit of life.

2. *It is the will of the King of saints that his people should enjoy the rest and peace of his gospel.* He would not have them always laboring and heavy laden, as under the law; but he would have their souls feel and enjoy the ease, the liberty, the sweetness, the pure power and eternal rest of his life. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him to preach glad tidings to the meek, liberty to the captives, life to the dead, the opening of the prison to the prisoner of hope, the binding-up of the broken-hearted, the pouring in of oil upon the wounded: and he would have the souls of his people enjoy that which he came to bring them.

3. *Christ hath plainly chalked out the path of his rest to every weary, panting soul, which he that walketh in cannot miss of.* He hath *cast up, cast up;* he hath *made the way plain* in the gospel, so plain, that the way-faring man, though a fool, yet keeping to the light of the gospel, cannot err therein, or miss of the blessed rest thereof. How is it? Why "come unto me; take my yoke upon you and learn of me." He that walketh in this path cannot miss of it: the rest is at the end of it, nay, the rest is in it: "he that believeth entereth into the rest." The true faith, the faith which stands in the power, and which is given to the birth which is born from above, is the substance of the rest hoped for, and there is a true taste and some enjoyment of it given to him that truly believeth.

4. *The rest was once felt and enjoyed, when the gospel was known in power.* Believers, in the first day of the gospel, before the night overtook that glorious dispensation, found "peace and joy in believing;" yea, they could rejoice in the Lord always. They felt the power and the life, which stood over all the powers of darkness, and brought good to them out of every affliction, and out of every temptation, and out of every distress: so that they standing in the life, and in the power which had quickened them, and was present with them, they could "count it all joy when they fell into manifold temptations," knowing the advantage which

would accrue to them thereby, and possessing their souls in the pure patience, till God wrought it out for them. They had an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom: they received the kingdom which could not be shaken, and in it had fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, and in the eternal light the blood ran in their vessels, which cleansed them, and kept them pure; and they sat down with Christ in the heavenly places, even every one in the particular mansion which God had built in them by his Spirit. The fear of the living God was put in their hearts; the Spirit of the Lord was within them, and there his law was written, and read in the Spirit, and the treasures of his kingdom were opened by the key of David in the hand of the Spirit, and their souls had true satisfaction and rest in measure, and were travelling on towards the fulness.

5. *There is no rest to the soul to be enjoyed in the gospel from under the yoke.* This stands eternally: that which yokes down that which would be at ease and liberty out of the life, that is the soul's true rest; there is no other: and under the yoke it is enjoyed, and not otherwise; only when that which is to be yoked down is consumed and destroyed, it is then no longer a yoke, but perfect liberty. But the same thing which is the liberty is the yoke: and under the yoke, the sweetness, the ease, the lightsomeness, the safe possession of the life is enjoyed. Mark this therefore diligently: the yoke is not one thing, and the liberty another; but one and the same. The power of God, the life everlasting, the pure light, the divine nature, is a yoke to the transgressing nature; but it is the ease, the pleasure, the rest, the peace, the joy, the natural centre of that which is born of God.

Now to the soul that hath felt breathings towards the Lord formerly, and in whom there are yet any true breathings left after his living presence, and after the feeling of his eternal virtue in the heart, I have this to say: Where art thou? Art thou in thy soul's rest? Dost thou feel the

virtue and power of the gospel? Dost thou feel the ease which comes from the living arm, to the heart which is joined to it in the light of the gospel? Is thy laboring for life in a good degree at an end? And dost thou feel the life and power flowing in upon thee from the free fountain? Is the load really taken off from thy back? Dost thou find the captive redeemed and set free from the power of sin, and the captivity broken, and he which led thee captive from the life and from the eternal power, now led captive by the life, and by the redeeming power, which is eternal? Hast thou found this, or hast thou missed of it? Let thine heart answer. Ah! do not imagine and talk away the rest and salvation of thy soul. The gospel state is a state of substance, a state of enjoying the life, a state of feeling the presence and power of the Lord in his pure, holy Spirit, a state of binding-up, a state of healing, a state of knowing the Lord, and walking with him in the light of his own Spirit. It begins in a sweet, powerful touch of life, and there is a growth in the life (in the power, in the divine virtue, in the rest, peace, and satisfaction of the soul in God) to be administered and waited for daily. Now art thou here, in the living power, in the divine life, joined to the spring of life, drawing water of life out of the well of life with joy? Or art thou dry, dead, barren, sapless, or at best but unsatisfiedly mourning after what thou wantest?

Well, ye that are dry, dead, barren, as it were without the living God (that know not the shining of his sun, nor the descending of his dews from on high on his tender plants, nor the care, diligence, and circumspection of the husbandman over his husbandry), oh! wait for the quickening virtue, for the visitations of the day-spring from on high! that ye may be quickened again to God, that ye may find his life visiting you, his Spirit breathing upon you, that the seed of Jacob may be raised in you to travel out of this barren state, even out of this land of darkness, and from under the shadow of death, to the land where life lives and flourishes, and daily distributeth plentiful nourishment and refreshment to all its offspring, who are taught to wait for it,

and to feed on it in the holy place, out of the sight of the eye of the fleshly wisdom.

And ye who are still gasping after the living God, on whom the breathings of life still abide; who remain unsatisfied inwardly for want of the presence of the Lord, and whose hearts still mourn and lament deeply after him, oh! consider what is the matter, that ye have mourned so long, and sought so long, and yet to this day are at a distance from the thing ye have mourned for and sought after.

"Strait is the gate, narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The way of unbelief is broad, yea, the way of belief is broad also. It is easy for a man so to believe concerning Christ, or in Christ, (as his heart may call it) as to miss of the nature of the true faith, and of the sweet and blessed effects which accompany it. It is easy likewise to miss the yoke, (to take up a wrong yoke, in the self-will, self-wisdom, self-interpretation of scriptures) or easy starting aside from the true yoke; but it is hard coming under the yoke of the life, and hard abiding under it. Again, it is easy mislearning; a man may so read, and so hear, as that he may be always learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; never come to the truth as it is received and held in Jesus; but may so get and hold the knowledge of the truth, as man in his wisdom may get and hold it from the letter. And if a man thus miss the way, how can he attain the end? If a man begin not in the true faith, in the living faith, how can he attain the rest which the true faith alone leads to? If a man miss of the yoke, or abide not constantly under the yoke, how can he meet with the true ease and rest which is in it, and which it alone can administer? If a man learn not the truth aright of the true teacher, how can he ever reap the effects of the true knowledge? Ah, poor hearts! it is not enough to have breathings after God, nor to be very diligent and industrious, either in outward ordinances, or inward exercises of spirit; but the way of the gospel must be cast up by God, and the soul led into it by him, and daily preserved by him, and must walk in the path which is

proper for it to walk in, or it may mourn and cry all its days, and never meet with that enjoyment of God, and satisfaction in God, which it waits for, and cries after. It is one thing to mourn after a gospel-state, but another thing to be brought into it by the power. With my heart I own those that mourn after, and feel the want of, God, wherever they are; but this I know certainly, that they can never come to the enjoyment of him, but in that living path which the Scriptures testify of to be in him who is the life, and which his Spirit is now found manifestly leading into. Blessed be his name!

Quest. But how may my poor soul, who have long mourned, and groaned, and been sick of love after my beloved, but could never attain to the satisfactory enjoyment of him, come to walk in his path, that so I may meet with, and lie down in, the power of life and salvation which the gospel holds forth to the true believer, and which I have been long sensible of the deep want of?

Ans. Thou that wouldst enjoy thy beloved, and feel the rest of his gospel, and walk in that path which leads thereto, wait to learn of the Spirit these things following:

1. Know what it is that is to walk in the path of life, and indeed is alone capable of walking therein. It is that which groans, and which mourns; that which is begotten of God in thee. The path of life is for the seed of life. The true knowledge of the way, with the walking in the way, is reserved for God's child,—for God's traveller. Therefore keep in the regeneration, keep in the birth: be no more than God hath made thee. Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running; give over thine own desiring to know or to be any thing, and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is his portion. And as thou takest up the cross to thyself, and sufferest that to overspread and become a yoke over

thee, thou shalt become renewed, and enjoy life, and the the everlasting inheritance in that.

2. Know in what light it is to walk, which is in the light of the Spirit. There the child is begotten (not in Satan's darkness, or highest transformings into the likeness of light, which is but darkness; nor in the light of man's wisdom, searching knowledge, or comprehension), and there it walks; in that light it fetcheth every step and motion towards the land of life; therefore hold no knowledge out of the Spirit. If any knowledge concerning the things of God be held out of the freshness of the Spirit, it presently proves dead and unprofitable. The spiritual Israel cannot travel without a spiritual light: which light is eternal and incomprehensible, and cannot be held by man's spirit, but shineth fresh in the renewed spirit every day, and so is daily gathering it more and more inward into itself, comprehending it in itself, and preserving it in its own purity, clearness, and brightness. Oh! this is it hath undone many, even catching at light from the Spirit, transplanting the image of divine things into the earthly principle, and there holding of them in the earthly part, growing wise by them there, and making use of them from thence as man sees good, and not seeing a necessity of depending on the Spirit for fresh light and life every day to every spiritual motion. Thus the traveller soon comes to lose the true path, and instead thereof travels on in a road of his own wisdom's forming: and so though he seems to himself to make a large progress, yet makes no true progress at all, but is exceedingly run out aside in a by-way; all which ground he must traverse back again, ere he can come to the truth of his former state, or proceed in the true travel.

3. Know and keep to the power, which alone began any true work in the heart, which alone can preserve it, and which alone can carry it on. Christ was made a priest, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life:* and every sacrificer under him (which every true believer is) is so made by the same power. The powers of darkness are continually at hand, which nothing can

stand its ground against (much less walk on safely) without being in that power which is above them. The first coming to Christ must be in the power of the Father's drawing: and no believing afterwards is of the true nature, nor will avail the soul in its progress and travel towards life, but what abides in, and goeth forth in the same power. So the taking up the yoke, and drawing in it, must be by the power of the new life; and so must the disciple's learning be. As the master teacheth in the power of the Spirit the things which alone can be seen with the new eye, heard with the new ear, and received into the new heart; so the scholar must learn and receive his lessons of life in the same power. Let any disciple of Christ be from under the shadow of the power, believe out of the power, walk out of the power, act out of the power, he is from that wherein his life stands, and wherein alone is his preservation; and ah! how liable is he then to falls, bruises, snares, and temptations of the enemy.

4. Watch against the selfish wisdom, in every step of thy growth, and in every spiritual motion, that that come not between thee and thy life; that that deceive thee not with a likeness, a shadow, making it appear more pleasing to the eye than the substance. Every step of thy way it will be laying baits for thee; and it is easy for deceit to enter thee at any time, and for that wisdom to get up in thee under an appearance of spiritual wisdom, unless the Lord tenderly and powerfully preserve thee: and if it prevail, it will lead thee from the path of the true wisdom; it will cozen thee with a false faith, instead of the true faith; with false praying, instead of the breathings of the true child; with diligence and zeal in thy false way, instead of the true zeal and diligence; yea, it will hurry thee on in the path of error, shutting that eye in thee which should see, and hardening thine heart against thy bosom friend. And being thus deceived, thou mayest be as zealous in thy age and generation against the truth, as the Jews were in theirs: and as certainly as they put Christ to death, and persecuted his apostles, though they cried up the former prophets, so certainly

thou, under this deceit, canst not but act against the present dispensation and appearance of Christ's Spirit, and would persecute either the prophets, apostles, or Christ himself, were it their present day now so to appear as formerly they did.

5. Let nothing judge in thee (concerning thine own heart, or concerning others, or concerning any way or truth of God) but only the begotten of God in the heart. Let the light in which thou art begotten to God, and which shines upon his begotten, be the only judge in thee, and then thou canst not err in judgment. Be not hasty, be not forward in judgment; keep back to the life, still waiting for the appearance and openings of the life. A few steps fetched in the life and power of God are much safer and sweeter than a hasty progress in the hasty, forward spirit.

Indeed this is the true religion, to feel God beginning the work, and to wait on him for his carrying it on. The feeling of God's Spirit beginning somewhat in the heart, the heart's waiting on him for more of his Spirit, and walking on with him in his Spirit, as he pleaseth to quicken, lead, draw, and strengthen; this is the spiritual and true religion: and there is no duty or ordinance of the gospel out of the Spirit; but it is easy crying up and observing the likeness of any of them out of the Spirit, into which observance a strange spirit easily enters; and then that which was of God in the heart soon withers, and a contrary building is raised, and the state of the heart changed. Oh! wait on the Lord, that he may give you to understand these things; for the apostasy from God is very deep, and more provoking among the Protestants than among the Papists, yea, most of all provoking where it is most inward and spiritual.

Quest. But how may I know and keep to the begotten of God, and to the light and power of the Lord, and keep down the fleshly wisdom and comprehension concerning the things of God?

Ans. When God begets life in the heart, there is a savor of it in thy vessel, and a secret, living warmth and virtue,

which the heart in some measure feels, whereby it is known. Lie low in the fear of the Most High, that this leaven may grow and increase in thee. This is the leaven of the kingdom; this is it which must change thy heart and nature, and make thy vessel (which perhaps hath been long and much corrupted) fit to receive the treasure of the kingdom. Now while the savor is upon thee, while the virtue of the life is fresh in thee, thou findest some strength towards God, with some little taste and discerning of the things of his kingdom. Know thy weakness, and go not beyond thy measure; but in what thou hast received bow before the fulness, worship God in that, and be patient in what he exercises thee withal, waiting for more from him. And when the night comes upon thee, and thou perhaps art at a loss, missing the savor and presence of the life, and not knowing how to come by it again, be patient and still, and thou wilt find breathings after a fresh visitation, and a meek, humble, broken spirit before the Lord. Thou wilt see thou canst do nothing to recover his presence again; nay, thou canst not so much as wait for him, or breathe after him, without his help; but he is nigh to the poor, nigh to the broken, nigh to the distressed, nigh to the helpless. Oh! do not, with thy fleshly cries and roarings, think to awaken thy beloved before his season; but in the night of distress, feel after somewhat which may quiet and stay thy heart till the next springing of the day. The sun will arise, which will scatter the clouds; and he is near thee who will give thee to hope that thou shalt yet see God, and find again the quickenings and leadings of his Spirit. And in the day of his power thou wilt find strength to walk with him; yea, in in the day of thy weakness his grace will be sufficient for thee; and he will nurture thee up in his life by his pure Spirit, causing thee to grow under his shadow; and he will be teaching thee to live, and to speak, and to move and act from the principle, and within the compass of his light and life eternal. Only be not wise to catch the notion of things into the earthly part, where the moth can corrupt, and where the thief can break through and steal; but

know the divine treasury, where all the things of life are treasured up by the Spirit, and handed forth to the living child with fresh life, according to its need of them. And thus thy heart being kept close to God, and thy spiritual senses continually exercised about the things of God, it will be easy to thee to know the shepherd's voice, and to distinguish the sound of the Spirit in thine own heart: and that which tries spirits and motions in thine own heart, will also give thee the discerning of truth and error abroad, even of the Spirit of God, and the spirit of Satan in others; so that thou wilt be able to try not only words, but spirits, becoming acquainted with the anointing, which savors all things, and will give thee to judge, not by the words, but by the power: for thou thyself being in the power, in the anointing, in the savor, it will become natural to thee to feel, to taste, to know; and unite with what is one with thy life, what comes from the same spirit in others, and to turn from the contrary. And thus thy life, thy growth, thy path will be sweet, safe, clear, certain, demonstrative in the Spirit and past all reasonings of flesh and blood, either in thyself or others. The beginning of life eternal is in a higher principle than man can come at. Man's wisdom and knowledge of the things of God is but brutish before it. As thou comest into that principle, abidest and growest in that principle, thou art beyond man's judgment, and art able to judge man, and fathom his whole course as with a span; but art quite out of his reach in the lowest of thy motions, thoughts, or actions; I mean such as flow from, and are comprehended in, the life.

ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

CONCERNING THE

WORSHIP OF THE LIVING GOD,

WHICH HE TEACHETH ISRAEL, HIS PEOPLE.

WHO KNOW HIM TO BE THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND THE WORSHIP WHICH HE TEACHETH THEM, TO BE THE ONLY TRUE, SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

WITH SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATING TO CONVERSION, AND TO TENDERNESS OF CONSCIENCE.

Because the *worship of God* is a weighty thing, and there have been (and still are) so many errors about it, and the errors therein are of such dangerous consequence, both in relation to men's eternal estate hereafter, and to their right constitution, peace, and welfare in this world; and because I have had deep experience concerning the *worship of God* from a child, having travelled in spirit with my God for the right knowledge thereof, and in singleness of heart giving up unto him, according as he hath taught and led my poor, needy, depending soul; I say, therefore is it on my heart, to answer some few questions concerning the *worship of God*, for the service of such as both desire and need instruction therein.

Quest. 1. Who is the worshipper, the acceptable worshipper in the sight of God? Or whom hath God chosen out, to hold forth his worship in the sight of the world, since he rejected the Jews with their worship?

That God hath appointed a chosen people to worship him, that I presuppose; though, if need were, the proof thereof might be ready at hand. It is not every man that would thrust himself upon the Lord, whom the Lord will accept: but "the Father seeketh such to worship him," John iv. 23.

There is a capacity to be found in man, to make him a worshipper; even such a capacity, as may enable him to perform that worship which God requireth of him. Now this is the thing to be inquired into; What this capacity is, and who are the persons that are found in this capacity?

Ans. The worshipper in the times of the gospel, the worshipper under the New Testament, is "he that is born of God." He that is drawn out of the dark spirit of this world, and formed anew in the light of God's Spirit. He that is a Jew inward, he that hath the uncircumcision of his heart cut off by the power of God; this is the worshipper, whom "the Father seeks to worship him." This is the sort of worshippers God chose, when he cast off the Jews. God did not choose any one nation, or many nations, instead of that one which he cast off; but he sent his apostles and ministers among all nations, to gather a spiritual seed, instead of the natural. And these alone are capable of setting up, and holding forth, his spiritual worship unto the world, and to provoke them to wait for, and press towards, the capacity of coming into the same spiritual worship with them.

Quest. 2. Which is the place of worship?

Ans. The only place of worship in the New-Testament, is where the spiritual worshippers meet together. The place is spiritual. As the worship is spiritual, so is the place where it is to be offered. It hath a spiritual consideration; not outward, as under the law. It is to be offered in the Spirit; that is the place. Where doth my soul offer its private worship to God? Hath it relation to any outward place? Or is it in the building which God hath reared up in my heart by his Spirit? Which building stands in, and is comprehended in, his Spirit. And I can offer his public worship in no other place, but in a building of the same nature, in a house built of more of the same stones. This then is the way of worshipping in the true Light; divers living stones meeting together, every one retiring in spirit into the living name, into the power which begat them, they all meet in one and the same place, in one and

the same power, in one and the same fountain of Life; and here they bow down to the Father of life, offering up living sacrifices to him, and receiving the bread and water of life from him, and feeding in the rich pastures of his infinite fulness. In the holy city, in the living temple which is built by God, of the stone which all other builders refuse, is the place of the worship of the living God, where the true Jews meet to offer up their spirits, souls, and bodies, a living sacrifice to the Father of life; and where they meet with such a glorious presence and power of the Father, as none but the true Jews were ever acquainted with.

Quest. 3. What is the worship, or what are the sacrifices, which the true worshippers offer up to God in this holy place?

Ans. The gifts of his Spirit. These they offer up, and nothing else. The breathings which the Father gives into the heart of the child, they are breathed back unto him in the same spirit of life; in the living sense, in the quickening power. Nothing of man's wisdom, nothing of man's invention, nothing according to man's will, nothing that would please the flesh, or seem glorious in its eye, is offered up here; but the exhortations, or directions, or reproofs that spring up in God's light, in God's wisdom, they are given forth in the leadings, and by the guidance of his Spirit, and they reach to the hearts of those, to whom he pleaseth to direct them. And this is the ground of such meltings, and breakings, and convictions of soul (and such-like inward operations) as are frequently found in such assemblies. For the living God is there, and the dread of his power overspreads the hearts of such as are gathered into and assembled in his name; and the life springs in the earthen vessels, and the savor is precious to all that have their spiritual senses.

Quest. 4. What is the season of offering up these gifts?

Ans. The seasons of the true worship stand in the will of God. They are gifts, and the time of them stands in the will of the Giver. *Prayer* is a gift. A man cannot pray when he will; but he is to watch and to wait, when the

Father will kindle in him living breathings towards himself. So the *word of God* (whether of exhortation or instruction) is a gift, which is to be waited for, and then to be given forth in the life and strength of that Spirit which caused it to spring. Indeed it is a hard matter either to speak the word of the Lord, or to hear the word of the Lord. A man may easily speak what he invents, and another may easily hear and judge of such words; but to speak the word of life, requires the tongue of the learned in the language of God's Spirit; and to hear the word of life, requires a quickened ear: and to know the times and seasons of the spirit, requires both being begotten of the Spirit, and being acquainted with it.

Quest. 5. Was this the worship of the former Christians in the apostles' days?

Ans. Search the Scriptures. Were they not come to the New Jerusalem? And where did they offer their sacrifices? Did they offer them in the Old Jerusalem, or at *Samaria*, or the mountain where the fathers worshipped? Or did they not rather offer them at the Mount Zion, to which they were come; where the male of the flock (even the Lamb without spot) is known, and the blood of sprinkling felt? Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. and 1 Pet. ii. 5. Oh! read, read, in the life of God, the nature of the things themselves; and do not feed upon your own imaginations, or the imaginations of any other men concerning them. Sweet is our God; his living presence is exceedingly nourishing to the soul; precious is his power felt in the heart; it is no less than life eternal to worship him in his Spirit. Oh! let not the enemy of the soul cheat your souls any longer of the precious things of his kingdom, with husky and dry food instead thereof, which only gratifieth the earthly part, but nourisheth not the immortal life.

Quest. 6. How came the worship of God to be transformed and changed so from the living power, into such dead, formal ways as generally worshippers in the world are found in?

Ans. The enemy hath done this, by God's permission.

The Lord was pleased to suffer him thus far to prevail against the truth; even to get into the form of it, and there to beget men into the form, and then deny and turn against the power. And this is the way of antichrist in kingdoms and nations, even to set up a formal way of worship, and by it to fight against the true power.

Quest. 7. How long hath this been done, and how long is it yet to last?

Ans. From antichrist's beginning, all the time of his reign, until his overthrow. The formal way of religion will never be overturned, nor the power of religion find place in the earth, but there will be still countenancing of formal ways of worship, and turning head against the power and life of the Spirit, until antichrist's time come to an end, and the Lord consume him by the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming.

Quest. 8. When shall this be?

Ans. The Lord is about this work. He hath already raised up that which hath not been raised up for many generations; and the Lord hath sorely smote down the spirit of antichrist in many hearts already; and he is fetching a great and universal blow at him; at which stroke, when it cometh from the throne of God, the nations shall tremble before him; and it will be as honorable to wait for the movings of his Spirit, and to worship him alone therein, as now it is reproachful.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATING TO CONVERSION, AND TO TENDERNESS OF CONSCIENCE.

Quest. WHAT is the way of conversion?

Ans. To turn men from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Quest. When is a man converted?

Ans. When he is gathered into the light, and into the power, out of the darkness of sin and dominions of Satan.

Quest. How is man converted?

Ans. By the operation of the light and power of God upon his conscience.

Quest. In what condition is the conscience before God works upon it?

Ans. Hard and corrupt; hardened by selfish reasonings and dark imaginations, against the convictions of the light and operations of the power of God, and corrupted with the sin and iniquity that dwell in it.

Quest. What doth God make it in his working upon it?

Ans. Gentle and tender, fit to receive the impressions of his Spirit. By the influence and power of his Spirit on the conscience, he openeth the ear to hearken to his voice, and prepareth the heart to follow him in his leadings.

Quest. How doth God carry on his work in the converted soul?

Ans. By keeping it low and tender, out of the self-wisdom and hardening reasonings of the human understanding: by this means he keeps it pliable to the light and power of his Spirit.

Quest. Is only the tender conscience then fit to be wrought upon by God?

Ans. Yea, indeed, that alone. The heart that is hard is inconsiderate of the voice of God, and stiff and stubborn against it; having ever at hand some wisdom or will of the flesh, to withstand the voice and leadings of God by.

Quest. Who is it that preserves the conscience tender?

Ans. The Lord of the conscience. He who made it knoweth the proper temper of it; and his light and power is alone able to preserve it in that tenderness which he formed it in.

Quest. What is it that hardens the conscience?

Ans. The wisdom of the flesh. Man, having gained a wisdom out of the light of God, by the imaginations, reasonings, and strength thereof, hardens himself against God.

Quest. What is most necessary for a man to be vigilant in, that desires to have the work of conversion to go on in his heart?

Ans. To be careful to turn from and avoid the reasonings of man's wisdom, and to have his eye and ear open to the light and voice of God's Spirit, that his conscience may be kept upright and clear before the Lord.

Quest. What stains the conscience?

Ans. Any disobedience to God's Spirit, any hearkening to, or following the voice of, a strange spirit. This lets in the darkness, which defiles, even as the light cleanses.

Quest. Is a man then to expect such a thing as the leadings of God's Spirit in his conscience?

Ans. A man cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but he must be born again, even "born of the Spirit." So saith the Scripture, and so saith the experience of every one who feels the new birth. And when he is born of the Spirit, he is to abide with him, and learn the law of the new life, and receive power from him daily; or the spirit of darkness will soon get ground upon him, and by degrees be recovering him back again into his dominions.

Quest. Surely if it be thus, hard is the way of religion, and few there be who are found in the truth of it.

Ans. The way of religion is hard indeed, and wholly contrary both to man's wisdom and will; insomuch as he cannot enter into it, nor walk therein, but as they are cut down. He that will be a disciple of Christ, and follow the leadings of his Spirit, must deny himself wholly, and become another's, and be content to stand or fall to his own Master. He cannot please men, no not in his worshipping of God;

but must turn from that which is glorious in their eyes, and sacrifice that which is to them an abomination. So that he must look to be condemned by men, who will be approved in the sight of God.

Quest. Why hath God put his people upon such hardship, as still (in all ages and generations) to walk in a way contrary to the world, and still to be the objects of its hatred, scorn, and persecution?

Ans. How can it be otherwise, he begetting them in a Spirit contrary to the world, and which testifieth against the world, showing that the deeds thereof are evil? How can the spirit of the world but still turn against such, and hate, and persecute them?

Quest. How long shall it be thus?

Ans. Till truth be raised by the power of God into dominion over the spirit and power of darkness. The Spirit of life now suffers under the burden of man's corruptions; in love to them, striving to save them therefrom. There is somewhat in every sinner that at seasons groans under the weight of his sins, and in some proprotion strives against the burden thereof. This shall not always lie underneath; but in the day of the Lord rise over the transgressor: and in that day shall Israel be glorious with his God, and receive praise of him, and be eased of all that hath oppressed him.

Quest. Is there such a day to be?

Ans. The Scriptures testify of such a day, wherein the Lord "alone shall be exalted," and "wherein he will take away the rebuke of his people from off all the earth," and bring down "all that is high and lifted up" above the fear and Spirit of the Lord: and in this our age the Lord hath chosen many messengers to run up and down, and proclaim this day. And as sure as the Lord liveth, what he hath spoken shall come to pass, and not a tittle of it fall to the ground. God did not make man for him to serve his own lusts, nor his creation to serve the lusts of man; but he made man to fear before and serve his Creator; and he made the creatures to be ordered by man in the fear and

wisdom of God to the glory of God. The spirit of God now groaneth under man's iniquity; the spirits of his people mourn and sigh also; yea, and the very creatures groan under the *bondage of corruption;* and the God of bowels heareth their cry; and a day, even a mighty day of redemption and deliverance is determined, wherein the spirit of the world shall be sunk down, with all its weight of wickedness, and the Spirit of life and righteousness rise in its glory.

Amen, hallelujah! everlasting praises to the Omnipotent One, *who was, and is, and is a coming;* who hath reigned, doth reign, and will reign, over all the powers of darkness, in the pure power and glory of his life for evermore. Let all the lambs skip for joy; let all the stars of the morning shout: for the darkness vanisheth, and is passing away, and the light of life shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. *Amen, hallelujah!*

Happy is the eye that seeth this, and the heart that prepareth for it, overlooking all that stands between. This is the hope of Israel, and the expectation of all that wait for the Lord, which he is hastening upon the earth.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

FOR

THE OPENING OF THE EYES

OF THE

JEWS NATURAL.

THAT THEY MAY SEE THE HOPE OF ISRAEL, WHICH HATH SO LONG BEEN HID FROM THEM.

WITH SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

FOR THE

DIRECTION, COMFORT, HELP, AND FURTHERANCE OF GOD'S SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, IN THEIR TRAVELS IN SPIRIT FROM SPIRITUAL EGYPT THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL WILDERNESS, TO SPIRITUAL CANAAN;

WHICH IS THE LAND WHERE THE REDEEMED SOUL FLOURISHETH IN THE LIFE, WALKING WITH GOD, AND WORSHIPPING HIM IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

PREFACE.

Several things hath the life, begotten by the eternal virtue, breathed in me towards my Father for, in relation both to myself and others, from my childhood. As touching myself; first, that I might be a vessel for him; that I might be freed from the bondage of corruption, and brought forth in the image of his life. Secondly, that I might be filled with his life; that I might be satisfied in the presence, and with the fulness of the spring of my life; even that I might have enough of my God in my heart continually. Thirdly, that he would, of his own mere goodness, both preserve the vessel, and dwell in it for ever; that so my tenure and possession of him, and fitness for him, might be of his grace, of his love, of his good-will, of his own nature, depending wholly and altogether on him, and not at all on any thing that can be expected from the creaturehood in its pure state. And likewise, that if he please to use me in any service, it might be of him, and for him, and to him: that he would bring me so low in myself, that I might not be able to detain any of his glory and virtue from him; but the meanness of the vessel might still so appear to me, and also be so sensibly discerned and acknowledged by all other eyes also, that the excellency of the power and of the glory might run back entirely into his pure bosom.

Besides these, there have been vehement desires in me concerning others also. First, towards mankind in general, that they might have an exceeding merciful and powerful day of visitation, even that the whole earth might be touched with the power of life, and drawn out of the darkness. Oh! how hath my soul breathed for lost mankind! and how hath my spirit travailed, with unutterable pangs and earnestness, for unheard-of, unthought-of, and altogether unexpected mercy and good-will towards the sons of men in general.

Secondly, towards my brethren in spirit, that they might know the day of redemption and power in Spirit, and not always lie grovelling on the earth, and groaning and mourning because of the lusts and corruptions, but might know deliverance in power, and might sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb, because of their feeling victory over Pharaoh and the dragon; and might serve and worship the living God in Spirit and truth, without fear of interruption and captivity from the enemy any more. Thirdly, towards the Jews after the flesh, that their iniquity might be blotted out, their wound healed, the pure eye opened in them, and the pure glory revealed to them; that they might know the Shepherd of Israel in Spirit, the spiritual tents of Jacob, the beauty of the footsteps of the spiritual flock, and might travel out of their darkness, earthliness, and literal knowledge, into the land of pure life, rest, and peace, and fresh joy in the living God, whereof their land of Canaan, with all the good things thereof, was but a shadow, and might be anointed with the fresh oil of the salvation of the Messiah, and might become, indeed, an holy nation; yea, a kingdom of priests, to offer up spiritual sacrifices on God's spiritual altar.

My soul still breatheth to the Lord, and waiteth on him for all these things; and as he draweth my spirit forth, so am I ready in spirit to be serviceable unto him therein. These present drawings and openings of my life, in the Questions and Answers following, are both towards the Jews in the flesh, and also the Jews in Spirit, that they may meet in One, even in the one path and pasture of life, where there is one Shepherd, one seed, one flock, one Spirit, one beginning, one progress, one end, in one and the same circle of life. The Lord my God take it into his own hand, dispose of it for good, manage and bless it according to his pleasure!

I. P.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

FOR THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF THE JEWS NATURAL.

Quest. WHAT was the rise of that people the Jews?

Ans. They came of Abraham after the flesh, who was God's friend, whom God took from his father's house, and from his native country (where he was worshipping and serving idols) to be the stock and pattern of the faithful; both of the Jews according to the flesh, and of the Jews in spirit. Of this root, of this stock, came this people according to the flesh, who were a holy nation, a circumcised people, a sanctified people outwardly; and (as long as their day lasted) were the beloved of God, the pitied, the pardoned, the redeemed ones, even until the shadows were finished, and the season came for the substance to appear and be set up in the world; whereof they had the first offer also, and out of whom was the first gathering for the spiritual building. But, they generally hardening their hearts, and cleaving to the wisdom and knowledge which their wise ones had taught them, (from their misunderstanding the letter of the Scriptures) missed of the Spirit, rebelled against the redeeming power, and so lost their share in the inward glory, and by God's righteous hand were cut off from their outward also, their day being spent, and the blood, not only of the prophets, but of the Son and heir himself also, required at their hands.

Quest. How came this people to be the chosen people at first, and so long to continue such?

Ans. It was not for their righteousness, not for their loveliness, or pliableness to God above other people; but be-

cause it pleased the Lord freely to love them, and to pitch upon them for the people of his choice after the flesh, in the free covenant which he made with Abraham. "The earth is the Lord's with the fulness thereof;" and he may choose whom he will to fill with his inward and spiritual glory, (even with the manifestations of his pure love, life, and presence) and he may also choose whom he will to make outwardly or typically beloved, great, and glorious. He chose Abraham freely, he gave to Abraham a heart to follow him, he gave him the faith and obedience which made him accepted with him; and he chose his seed after the Spirit to be his eternal heir, and his seed after the flesh to be his temporary heir. Thus of Isaac in Spirit, came the children of the promise in Spirit; and of Isaac after the flesh, came the seed of promise after the flesh. Sarah after the flesh bare one of these: the Sarah represented by her (or the free woman which is from above) bare the other. And of Isaac comes Jacob, worm Jacob, who serves for his wife; who flies from the face of Esau, yet afterwards finds favor in his eyes. From this worm do the twelve patriarchs branch forth, who were the heads of the tribes of Israel.. Thus hath it been with that nation according to the letter; and thus it hath also been, and still is, inwardly in Spirit; as the Israel of God, the Jews in Spirit, who are learned in the law of the Spirit of life, can very well read. Thus outwardly Israel was God's child, Ephraim his dear, his beloved, his pleasant son; Judah his praise, whom his heart was towards, and to whom he stretched forth his arm of salvation all the day long. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; and he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he became their Saviour." Thus it was with them, till the day of Israel after the flesh expired, and the day of Israel in Spirit was to succeed in the sight of the world.

Quest. What was the end for which God chose that people?

Ans. It was to be a vessel for him to form, to try and experiment what his love could bring them to, and bring

forth in them in that way of manifestation and operation. This God opens to Jeremiah concerning them, bidding him go down to the house of the potter; where, in a parable, they might read their own state, and what they were to expect from God, even to be formed by God unto the utmost, until he had made a perfect trial of them, and then to be broken and laid aside, as a vessel that could never be fitted for the Master's use in this way of dispensation. Jer. xviii. 4. On the Lord's part there was no defect towards his child, his spouse, his vineyard, his garden of pleasant plants (as this people was in that dispensation); for he was still a Father to them, faithful in covenant, tender in bowels, abundant in loving-kindness and mercies: yea, what could be expected from the Lord towards a people, according to that dispensation, which the Lord failed in? But they were still faithless, continually breaking covenant, erring from his dear and tender love, and drawing down the strokes of his wrath upon them: forsaking the guide of their youth, forgetting the love of their espousals; continually starting aside from the right state, wherein God pleased at first to set them, or at any time afterwards in any measure to reduce them.

Quest. How did God exercise and try them to the utmost, even till at length it was plainly manifest, that there was no firm keeping a people to him by virtue of that dispensation: but he must necessarily cut them off, choose another people, and take another course; if he would have a people for his heart to love and delight in, and for them to enjoy and possess him?

Ans. He tried them several ways, and in several states and conditions; as, First, In a state of captivity in the land Egypt. Secondly, In a state of straits and continual dependence upon God, even for necessaries, in the wilderness. Thirdly, In a state of enlargedness in the land of Canaan, which flowed with plentiful provisions for the outward man (which were also shadows and instructions concerning the inward blessedness). Fourthly, In often captivities. Fifthly,

In returns to their land again, with settlement and peace, and many blessings therein.

Quest. How did God try them in Egypt?

Ans. First, With sore bondage and oppression from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Secondly, With giving them the feeling of their state, the sense of their bondage, and causing them to cry unto the Lord for deliverance. Thirdly, In raising up a deliverer, and giving them a sign of the deliverance by the hand of the deliverer, in his smiting of an Egyptian, and saving a Hebrew. Fourthly, In sending the deliverer to them, with promises of deliverance, and with signs and symptoms of the delivering power. Fifthly, In pardoning their unbelief and rebellions against him in Egypt, and showing many signs and wonders for them in that land, till at length he had brought them forth by his mighty, outstretched arm, even against the will and mind of Pharaoh and their task-masters.

Quest. How did God find them in Egypt upon this trial?

Ans. Very unbelieving, very stubborn, misinterpreting his sign of deliverance, reasoning against his promise, because it came not so soon, and after the manner they expected. When he lifted up his hand to them to redeem them from under Pharaoh, to bring them forth out of the land of bondage, to the good land he had espied for them, and bid them forsake the idolatrous worships of Egypt, and not defile themselves any longer therewith; because he was now to become the Lord their God, and to appear in his power for them; yet they would not. Ezek. xx. 5, &c. When Moses would have reconciled a Hebrew to his brother he would not hear him; but upbraided him for slaying the Egyptian, not waiting on God to understand the figure, but misinterpreting and abusing it in the fleshly mind. When the deliverance succeeded not according to their expectations, they murmured against Moses and Aaron; and when God sent them again with a fresh promise, they would not mind it. Yet God bare with all this in them, and did not cast them off, but assuaged his wrath, and stirred up his love to make a further trial of them.

Quest. How did God try them in the wilderness?

Ans. By many temptations, signs, and wonders; by powerful appearances for them against their enemies; by bringing them into many straits; by unexpected and impossible supplies (I mean impossible to the sight or expectation of the outward eye); as with bread from heaven, multitudes of quails, water from the rock, keeping their clothes and shoes from wearing out and decaying. Likewise he gave a holy and righteous law to inform their minds in equity and righteousness; directing them in a holy way of walking with God, and one towards another, and chalking out unto them an acceptable path of worship; and this law was delivered in great majesty, dread, and terror, to cause a deep impression thereof upon their minds.

Quest. How did God find them in the wilderness?

Ans. Full of discontent; full of murmuring; full of self-will; full of doubts and questionings concerning God's power. They did not wait on him, who had delivered them out of the hand of Pharaoh, and from under the Egyptian task-masters; but they murmured against him. They did not wait for food or water when they wanted, but distrusted and complained; repining at Moses and Aaron, and sometimes talking of making a captain to lead them backward. Neither were they content with the provision which God allotted them (that was mean in their eyes), but they would have flesh. Though the Manna (the light bread as they esteemed it) of God's choice, and with God's blessing, had been far better for them, than the flesh, with his curse upon that lust which asked it, and would not be content without it. Again, they would not go on towards Canaan, or fight when God would have them, and when his strength would have gone along with them: but when he forbade them, of their own will, and trusting to their own strength, they would go on and fight. It is a sad record which Moses, their tender shepherd (who with the eye of true light had faithfully observed them), left concerning them, Deut. ix. 24. "You have been rebellious against the Lord, from the day that I knew you."

Quest. How did God deal with them in reference to the land of Canaan?

Ans. First, He prepared them for it. Secondly, He dispossessed their enemies, and placed them in it, giving them an inheritance according to their own will. Thirdly, He poured down blessings upon them therein.

Quest. How did God prepare them for the good land?

Ans. First, By many afflictions and exercises in the wilderness, wherein he judged and wore out the rebellious generation, who were consumed with dying, and raised up their children in the awe and dread of his mighty power. Secondly, By giving them a righteous law to walk by in every respect, that they might not be to seek how to please God, or how to walk one towards another, or towards the heathen among them, or round about them; but in every thing might be rightly instructed. Thirdly, By warning them of their own proneness to err from God, and of the danger thereof, both in relation to the loss of mercies, and drawing down of judgments; that they might watch against the erring nature and transgressing spirit in their hearts.—Fourthly, By appointing a way of sacrifice and mediation, whereby God might be atoned, either for particular persons, or for the land in general. Fifthly, By directing them to a principle as near to them, and more strong than the unrighteous principle; whereby they might be preserved in the obedience of the law, and from out of the reach of the curse.

Quest. How did God find them in their own land?

Ans. That generation, which was thus prepared, thus taught, thus directed, walked sweetly with the Lord, and was a precious savor in his nostrils; but soon after the evil thing sprang up again in the generations following, and they did quickly corrupt themselves, departing from the Lord, and running a whoring after their own hearts' lusts. Judg. ii. 7, &c.

Quest. How did God deal with them then?

Ans. He brought them judgment upon judgment, still weightier and weightier upon them, according as their need required, exercising loving-kindness and mercy towards

them, as much as possibly their estate could bear. He sent his prophets to forewarn them of the wrath, that they might be spared, if possible; and when his judgments and severity came, he mingled mercy therewith, that by both he might try to the utmost what they might be wrought to. He tried them a long while under the judges, and a long while under the kings, often recovering them and setting them to rights, expecting the fruit of his rod and of his love towards them.

Quest. What was the result of God's trying them under the judges and kings?

Ans. They wearied out God's prophets; yea, they wearied out the Lord also in that way of dispensation. They chose the false prophets before the true, lying divinations before the openings of life, and dead idols before the living God. The kindnesses and mercies of God were wasted upon them, for with his love they were not drawn; the bellows also were burnt, the lead consumed, the heat of the furnace spent upon them, and yet their tin and dross not purged away. Under the judges they tried out the Lord's patient expectation of good from his delivering hand, insomuch as he resolved to deliver them no more. Judg. x. 13. Under the kings they were as unruly (whether good kings or bad kings, given in love or wrath), insomuch as the Lord said, "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more." Isa. i. 5. There was, indeed, no bending of Israel after the flesh, and keeping him strait to God, in that way of dispensation; therefore must he be cast off; even becoming reprobate silver in the sight of the whole earth, because the Lord would reject him.

Quest. How came Israel after the flesh to be rejected?

Ans. His day of flesh was out, and the day of spirit was come, wherein the spiritual glory, which was to succeed the shadows of the fleshly, was to be set up; and so he not seeing that, nor entering into that, his own sun set, and he hath abode in the darkness unto this day.

Quest. How came he not to see the spiritual glory?

Ans. Because the eye of the flesh was open in him;

which eye cannot see it. He read the law in a gathered light, in the light of the earthly wisdom, and not in the light of the spring from whence it came; and then how could he possibly understand the law aright? Could he then choose but set up the shadows of the law in the stead of the substance which was veiled therein? He read Moses with the eye which can see but to the veil, and not to the glory which was revealed to Moses, and which Moses hid under the veil. And thus likewise he beheld the prophets, in the days of their appearance; not in the light in which they appeared, but in the light of his own reason and imaginations; and upon this ground the Jews still chose and cried up the false prophets, but persecuted the true. Now not seeing Moses in spirit, nor the prophets in spirit, how could they see him who was greater than the prophets; he looking so contemptibly to the sight of that eye wherewith they expected to see him? It is the Jew in spirit who alone can see and own the Messiah in spirit: yea, no fleshly Jew could possibly discern him then, whose eternal life, light, and power was hid under so mean a veil. He must be more than a Jew after the flesh, who can own so much as the law, or any of the prophets in spirit; and then surely it can require no less than inward Jewship to discern the Messiah himself. They knew by the letter that then he was to come and appear; but they could not know by their observations from the letter which was he; but alone by the pointing of the finger of the Spirit, which they were unacquainted with.

Quest. What did they do to him, not seeing his glory?

Ans. They dealt with him as they had dealt with the prophets before him, disdained him that he should claim to be the Son of God, slighted him, reviled him, reproached him, preferred Moses and the prophets above him (who all did but declare of him); yea, at last they preferred a thief and murderer before him, and put him to death after that manner that the prophets had foretold they would do.

Quest. Did the prophets foretel that the Jews would put the Messiah to death?

Ans. Yea, very manifestly, with the manner and circum-

stances thereof. Daniel said plainly that the Messiah should be cut off; though not for himself. chap. ix. 26. Isaiah shows the cause why he was cut off; to wit, "For the transgression of my people was the stroke upon him." chap. liii. 8. He was the Lamb without spot; there was no iniquity found in his heart, nor guile in his mouth; but he offered up his spotless soul, through the eternal Spirit, as a ransom for the souls of transgressors, and with his bruise are they healed. David shows yet more particularly how he should be cut off, "They pierced my hands and my feet." Psa. xxii. 16. And Zachary saith, that afterwards, in the days of their visitation, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." chap. xii. 10. Was he not betrayed by one of his own table? Psa. xli. 9. Did they not cast lots for his garments? Psa. xxii. 18. Was not gall also given him, and vinegar to drink? Psa. lxix. 21. Were not his bones kept from being broken, according to the paschal lamb, the type? Exod. xii. 46. Oh that the Jews could read the words of their own prophets in the light of the prophets, and not in the light of man's imagination! and then they could not but bow before the spring and fountain of that light, as it was revealed in flesh according to the Scriptures, and see how that body was prepared for the light to shine in, and for it to do the will in, and to offer up the sacrifice which God would have, that so an end might be put to all the sacrifices and offerings which God would not have. Psa. xl. 6. Dan. ix. 27.

Quest. What was to befall the Jews for refusing the day of their visitation by the Messiah, and for the putting of him to death?

Ans. They were to be cast off, to become no people, their covenant to be broken, their glory turned into shame, their light set in obscurity, their house made desolate, and the hand of God pursuing this desolate people, making them a scorn and reproach throughout all nations. Dan. ix. 27. And is not this come to pass upon them? For what person hath been more hateful and hated than a Jew, who was once the glory and envy of all nations? Yea, hardness and blind-

ness have so happened to them, that they cannot see the plainest things written in the prophets concerning the expiration of the day of Moses with all his shadows, and the succeeding of the spiritual glory in the days of the Messiah; but their eyes and hearts are still blinded, and held captive in the figures of things.

Quest. Is there any scripture of the prophets which declareth that they should be thus blind and hard?

Ans. The Spirit of the Lord in the prophet David (the beloved king, and figure of the Messiah) prayed for this righteous recompense to them. "Let their table become a snare before them, and for welfare a trap. Let their eyes be darkened that they see not, &c. Let their habitation be desolate," &c. Psa. lxix. 22, &c. What is their table? Where and on what do they feed? Is it not on the writings of Moses and the prophets? Now all the meanings, observations, and hopes which they gather from these (being under the curse, and out of the Spirit of the prophets) cannot but be that snare and trap; and that which entangleth them deeply to this day is, their misunderstanding and misinterpreting of Moses and the prophets. O Lord, my God, in the abundant riches of thy goodness, at length pity them, and let the fierceness of thine indignation abate towards them, and in thy love open their eyes, to see their state, and what they have refused, and against whom they have lifted up their heel, in their conceited wisdom and knowledge, which they have gathered from Moses' and the prophets' writings, that they may mourn after thee, and wait for thee in the way of thy redemption!

Quest. How long is this desolation and hardness to abide upon them?

Ans. Until God visit them with his Spirit, and open their eyes to see his spiritual glory, and turn their hearts towards it. Then their outward expectations and desires after an outward glorious kingdom will soon come to an end, and the Messiah will be known, owned, and received by them in Spirit; yet any outward glory that the Lord God sees good for them, they shall not want either. This the prophet

Isaiah plainly relates to the ear that is spiritual. chap. xxxii. 15. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." They must lie waste until the Lord God please to let forth his Spirit upon them, to gather them into his spiritual glory; for the day of their outward glory did end, and a spiritual succeeded, which they are to be gathered into, when the days of their distress and tribulation are accomplished.

The Spirit was once poured down from on high on the disciples of the Messiah, upon his ascending into his glory, and the wilderness then became a fruitful field, and the fruitful field was accounted for a forest; but over that glory the defence was not so stretched forth, but that a night overtook that day, and the wild beasts made a prey of that vineyard and fruitful field also, as well as of the former. But there is to be a more general pouring out of the Spirit, even upon all flesh, and the wilderness is more generally to be visited, and become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is more generally to be blasted and made a forest; insomuch as all flesh everywhere shall appear grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field, which shall fade and wither before the breath of God's Spirit. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness which is then visited, and righteousness shall remain in the field which is then made fruitful; and righteousness shall be powerfully operative, working out the lasting peace; and the effect of it shall be "quietness and assurance for ever." No more war, no more fighting with creatures, no more burdening and oppressing of the creation, no more sinning and offending against the Creator, no more being dispossessed of his life and glory; but the dwellings which God reareth up in the last days for Israel, his people, shall be peaceable habitations, sure dwellings, and quiet resting-places for evermore. Oh, let Israel feel that which is able to awaken him, and wait for this!

Quest. How shall they be visited and gathered?

Ans. By the new covenant, by the new law of the Messiah, which is to go forth out of the New Zion, and by the

word of the Lord, which is to issue out of the New Jerusalem: not by the covenant of Moses (their eyes may fail in hoping and looking out that way), but by the covenant of the Messiah, where the law of the life is written; not in tables of stone, or outward writings of the letter, but in the heart by the Spirit. There they shall be cleansed by inward water, receive the inward circumcision, and mark of the inward Jew; be sprinkled with the everlasting blood of the Lamb, and taught to offer up the spiritual sacrifice, and shall hear the voice which will tell them of the way, and which will lead them in paths they have not known. There the spiritual seed, the spiritual Israel, shall find the Shepherd of Israel, who leads into the land of life, puts forth his sheep into the pastures of life, gives them of the living streams to drink, begetting them as heirs of, and bringing them up in, the everlasting power and dominion of the life.

Quest. How may old Israel enter into this path, and so become new Israel?

Ans. By waiting on the Lord for the closing of that eye which is wise according to the flesh, and for the opening of that eye which is at first weak in spirit. There must be a low beginning: Israel must know and not despise the day of small things, if ever he will grow up into the riches and inheritance of his glory. There is a light in every heart at first, which gives a sound in the natural vessel, which is very hardly distinguishable from the natural, till, by obedience and subjection thereto, its living touch, virtue, and power comes to be felt and distinguished; but in the meek, humble, believing, and obedient, it daily appears more and more, and makes itself more clearly manifest to them who are walking on unto the kingdom and inheritance in it, while others are disputing about it.

Quest. How may Israel believe, and become subject to the light?

Ans. When there is a drawing felt in the heart, either to good, or against evil, he must not dispute concerning it on the one hand, nor run on in the forwardness on the other (for both these ways the breathings of the Spirit on him, and

springings up of the good seed in him, are easily quenched); but in the fear he is to trust himself with what his heart certainly feels in the drawing virtue, and in the humility to give up the members to the good, and to withhold them from the evil, waiting for strength from the fountain of strength towards both. By this means there is a travel and removal out of the corruption and filth of the heart, into the pure, holy law, nature, image, and will of God.

Quest. Where doth God find the heart, when he first visiteth it with his light?

Ans. In Egypt, in the darkness, in the bonds and captivity of death.

Quest. What doth the Lord do with it there?

Ans. He exerciseth it awhile there, till he hath made it fit for a wilderness-state.

Quest. What doth he do with it then?

Ans. He bringeth it into the wilderness which he hath fitted it for.

Quest. What doth he do with it in the wilderness?

Ans. He prepareth it for, and leadeth it towards, the land of life.

Quest. What doth he do with it then?

Ans. He giveth it an entrance into the everlasting kingdom (which is the land of life) according as he hath prepared and fitted it. That which is new-begotten, new-created and formed, new-born in the Messiah's eternal light, findeth an entrance into, and a habitation in, the light, and is not turned back into the land of darkness; it abiding in the virtue and principle of its life, although sometimes it may be exercised with the darkness for its further advantage. "Thou art our habitation from everlasting to everlasting," saith the child of light unto the Father of spirits, in all ages and generations.

Now that Israel after the flesh may the better understand the path of the spiritual Israel in the way of redemption, by the powerful visitations of the light of the Messiah in their hearts and consciences, and may know the gospel of his salvation, which is able to effect that which the law of

Moses could not, because of the weakness of the flesh on their parts; let them in fear, and silence of the natural wisdom, and in waiting on the Lord in spirit, consider the Questions and Answers following, relating to spiritual Israel.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

For the direction, comfort, help, and furtherance of God's spiritual Israel, in their travels in Spirit from spiritual Egypt, through the spiritual wilderness, to spiritual Canaan;

Which is the land where the redeemed soul flourisheth in the Life, walking with God, and worshipping him in Spirit and Truth.

Quest. WHAT is the gospel?

Ans. A good message, or glad tidings to man, in the fallen estate, concerning a promise of redemption out of it.

Quest. Is man then in a fallen estate?

Ans. His present temper, constitution, disposition, and whole course, upon the least touch of God upon his spirit, do in some measure discover his fall unto him, through the insensibleness which is come upon him by his grievous wound; and death, through the fall, maketh him very unapt to take notice thereof.

Quest. What was his estate before his fall?

Ans. A state of glory and blessedness, wherein he came pure out of the hands of his Creator, was fitted for his use, service, enjoyment, and delight, even for him to appear or disappear in, and exercise according to his pleasure.

Quest. Wherein did his glory and blessedness consist?

Ans. Chiefly in these four things; to wit, in the light, in the life, in the liberty in which the vessel was formed, and in the indwelling and appearing of the Creator there, according to his pleasure.

Quest. Open this a little further.

Ans. Man was made a vessel of light, a vessel of life, a vessel of pure freedom. He was formed in the eternal image and had a pure being in that image. He was light in the Lord, living in the Lord, free unto all good, and from all evil in the Lord. This was the state of his being at first, and thus was he made in the image a pure resemblance of the eternal purity and blessedness: but, besides this, he had the eternal life, the eternal substance, the eternal purity itself dwelling in the vessel, shining in it, and manifesting itself from it according to its pleasure.

Quest. How came man to fall from this estate?

Ans. Not willingly, not of an inclination of his own; but he was deceived, through the subtlety of temptation, to entertain a desire of enlarging his blessedness, out of the limits of the will of his Creator.

Quest. How could such a temptation enter man, he being pure and holy, inclined to good, and against evil, after the image of his Creator?

Ans. Man was not made to enjoy a perfection in himself separate from his Creator, or to live of himself, but by dependence. Now though he had no inclination in him not to depend, or to seek a life in himself out of the fountain, yet there was a capacity of so doing: before which capacity the tempter laid his bait of advancing him to a greater wisdom, glory, and excellency than his Creator had placed him in; with which he consulting out of the dependence upon his Creator fell from that which alone was able to uphold him in the pure state wherein he was made. Thus was he taken in the snare of misery, and brought to that loss which all the sons of Adam lie grovelling under to this day, when the Lord at any time awakens the sense thereof in them.

Quest. What was the state of man in and since the fall?

Ans. A state of darkness, a state of death, a state of deep captivity, wherein his soul, body, and spirit are become dark as to the light of God, dead as to the life of righteousness, and captive unto that spirit which hath entered them by their hearkening thereto, who dwelleth and ruleth in them in the darkness, as God did before in the light.

Quest. How is man dark? How is man dead? Is his soul or body dead as to their being? Or how else is it?

Ans. Man is not dead as to his being either in soul or body, but as to the right, pure, and sanctified state of each. The vessels still remain the same in being; but they are emptied of their proper liquor, and filled with other wine. The understanding is the same, the reason the same, the will the same, the memory the same, the bodily members the same, as to their being or matter; but they are all otherwise leavened, and another king now dwells in them, and reigns over them.

Quest. Then there needs not any dissolution of man's reason, or bringing it to nothing, in relation to man's recovery; but only a changing of the leaven.

Ans. Man is become another thing by degeneration from the life. He is so poisoned by sin and corruption, that he is to be wholly broken down and brought to nothing, even in the very naturals, that he may be new-made and built up in the newness of the Spirit. Thus he is to become as a fool, as a little child, or rather as a seed to be cast into the womb of life, there to be formed and born of the Spirit. And as he springs up in the life, he is to forget his own country, living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit; where watching to the Spirit, and against his own reason in the pure childishness, in the simple instinct and naturalness of the life, he shall at length find a reason new-formed and springing up in him; which, waiting on the Lord in obedience and subjection, shall be taken into unity with the life. But if the eye of reason open too fast, and be not kept down to the light of life, the betrayer will enter again at that door, and bring the soul into death, after it hath

had sweet and precious tastes of the redeeming virtue and power.

Quest. Can man in the fall see his fallen estate, and so seek after a recovery out of it?

Ans. It is not possible for him so to do, without some light shining upon him from the Redeemer. How can darkness discover darkness? That which maketh manifest the darkness is light. When the vessel is dark, and the prince of darkness filleth it, and dwelleth in it, what can that eye see but according to the darkness, judging evil good, and good evil, bitter sweet, and sweet bitter.

Quest. But there is no man but hath some light; no man but at some time or other seeth good or evil in some measure.

Ans. That ariseth not from the light of man's nature, as it now stands in the fall (which being wholly in the enemy's hands, and being itself become darkness, cannot at all give man notice of, or light him out of, the darkness), but from a fresh visitation of the life, which giveth all men a day of visitation by the shining of its light, wherein is some manifestation to man, and some certain sight by him both of the good and of the evil; and not only so, but there is also the living Spirit striving with him, and attracting him from the one to the other, according to the Lord's good pleasure, who is both the light, and also the determination of the proportion of every man's visitation by it.

Quest. But hath not man naturally a light in the fallen estate, which discovereth unto him good and evil?

Ans. Not a true light, not a true discovery; but only somewhat which the enemy setteth up in man as such, to keep him in the entanglements of the deceit, and out of the suspicion of it. For the enemy entering into him, by his subtlety blindeth and deceiveth his eye (that he may the better hold him captive in the deceit), insomuch as he discerneth not the false image which the enemy hath stamped upon him: for though the enemy bringeth man into a state of real darkness, death, and captivity; yet these do not at present appear to man what they are, but are miscolored,

or painted, to appear what they are not, the better to deceive, bewitch, and entangle man therein. The enemy did not represent darkness in its black hue, death and captivity in its dreadful appearance, to Adam; but as wisdom, as light, as a better life, as a greater freedom. And thus he still enters man, and after this manner he still dwells in man, until the true light pursue him, opening and discovering his deceit, and drawing man back from this false paradise of pleasure in wisdom and liberty out of the life, into a sense of his want of, and breathings after, the true garden of the living God.

Quest. Is man then mistaken in his judgment of good and evil since the fall?

Ans. Yes, altogether; and by this means doth he so pleasingly situate himself, and take up his habitation in the kingdom of darkness, wherein are strong-holds and wise reasonings against the true God, and for the false appearances of good, which the enemy of the soul strongly makes men believe to be such as he represents them for in the darkness. Thus in particular persons, and also in societies, evil is pursued after, and advanced for good, and the true good suppressed as evil, through the working of the mystery of darkness in men's hearts.

Quest. What then is the proper estate and condition of man in the fall?

Ans. A state of false light, of false life, of false liberty. He seemeth to himself advanced in wisdom above the low, empty, naked estate of innocency, which is nothing, and hath nothing, but by a continual dependence on the goodness of the Creator. He seemeth also advanced in life, advanced in liberty; he can speak his own words, think his own thoughts, do his own will, seek himself, please himself, satisfy himself. The life of righteousness is a yoke, a bond, in his eye; he is free from the restraint of it; he hath life in himself, and is exceeding wise in the compass of his own dominions. Thus doth the enemy transform the kingdom of darkness and death, giving fallen man a share with him in it, while he remains his willing subject. And here the

goods of the enemy, the heart estranged from God, yea, not only the devout and zealous worshipper in invented forms, but also the gross sinner, the envious, lustful, and wicked mind, the perverse tongue, the bloody hands and feet, are at peace, and have joy and pleasure in their course and circuit in the earth. But all this is but the deceit of the enemy, wherewith he hath cheated man with false appearances and representations instead of the true, as man himself will see, whenever the eye of his soul comes to be thoroughly awakened by the eternal light, whether here or hereafter.

Quest. What is the work of redemption?

Ans. To purge the old leaven out of the vessel, to purify the vessel from all the false appearances of light, to batter down all the strong-holds of the enemy in the mind, all the reasonings, thoughts, imaginations, and consultations, which are not of the pure, nor in the pure; and so to new-create and new-form the vessel in the image of the wisdom and purity wherein it was at first formed.

Quest. Who doeth this work, or who is man's redeemer out of the fall?

Ans. The Eternal Word or Son of the Father, even the wisdom and power which went forth from the fountain in the creation, the same goeth forth from the bosom of the Father to purify the creature, and so bringeth the creature back (being purified and cleansed) into his bosom again.

Quest. With what doth this Word, or Redeemer, redeem?

Ans. With his own life, with his own blood, with his own eternal virtue and purity. He descendeth into the lower parts of the earth, becomes flesh there, sows his own seed in his prepared earth, begets of his flesh and of his bone, in his own likeness, and nourisheth up his birth with his flesh and blood unto life everlasting.

Quest. What is this life? Or how doth it first manifest itself in the darkness?

Ans. It is the light of men. It is that which gave light to Adam at first, again to him after the fall, and to all men since the fall. It enlightens in nature; it enlightened nu-

der the law; it did enlighten under the gospel before the apostasy, and again since the apostasy.

Quest. How doth the light enlighten?

Ans. By its shining. The eternal Word moves, the life opens, the light shines: this, in the least degree, is a beginning of redemption; in its fulness it is redemption perfected.

Quest. How doth the light work redemption in its shining?

Ans. Two ways: first, By turning the heart from the darkness towards itself; secondly, By exercising the heart, being turned.

Quest. How doth it turn the heart from the darkness?

Ans. The light, by its shining and enlightening, findeth out its own, openeth it, and toucheth it with a secret virtue, which persuades out of, and draws the heart from, the principle and power of death and darkness, towards its own native spring.

Quest. May not these drawings be quenched, and the work of God stopped?

Ans. The plant of the Lord is exceeding tender, his pure Spirit jealous, the enemy very strong and subtle; insomuch as the plant itself may easily be crushed, the Spirit grieved and quenched, and the captivity redoubled.

Quest. If Adam was betrayed in his full strength, how shall this poor, weak plant spring up and grow, without being supplanted by the violence and treachery of the enemy? Or how shall the grieving of the Spirit be avoided by a heart so full of corruption and provocations, as man in the alienated state is, when the light first visits him?

Ans. The Lord God is nigh to help, nigh to pity, nigh to pardon, nigh to watch over and support worm Jacob: yea, nigh to revive life and spirit in him freely, and to heal his backslidings, and multiply pardons, or it could never be. Yea, the creature can never be brought so low, or so far lost, but there is still help in the nature of God concerning him, though there may not be help in any revealed promise.

Quest. How doth God exercise the heart which is turned?

Ans. In faith and obedience, through very great varieties

and changes of conditions. He exerciseth it in believing his voice, and in obeying his voice, and following him, in whatever, and into whatsoever, he draws and requires.

Quest. How is the voice of God known? Doth not the enemy speak inwardly also, and resemble his voice? How then is the voice of the Redeemer distinguished from him who counterfeiteth the Shepherd and his voice?

Ans. By these two means:

First, The soul lying low, out of the wisdom in which the enemy appears and forms his likenesses; in the simplicity which the Lord hath begotten, the life opens to it, and the true light appears, which manifests the false light, and false appearances of the deceiver.

Secondly, In that which is begotten of God there is not a hastiness or suddenness to determine; but a silent waiting on the Lord in subjection, till the life speak, and make things manifest. Thus the knowledge and light of the child is held in the will of the Father, and received from his hand, and according to his pleasure. Thus what he will he hides, and what he will he makes manifest, and the child, which is born of his will, is content with his will; and lying down there, it keeps out of the enemy's territories, and of the reach of his temptations.

Quest. What are the several estates or conditions wherein God exerciseth the spirit of man in faith and obedience?

Ans. The particular estates and conditions are innumerable; but they may be referred to these three general heads: First, An estate of breaking down the former building. Secondly, An estate of devastation or preparation to be new built. Thirdly, An estate of rebuilding. God doth not forget, but exercise his people in Egypt, even while they are in bondage, before they come to receive his law. He is visiting them in the dark land, opening the eye that can see the captivity, causing groans and sighs in their oppressed spirits, and then holding forth to them the promise, and preparing them for a departure from that land. Secondly, He hath a time of stripping them, of nurturing and bringing them up under his discipline and close exercises,

wherein they are desolate, and ready to sin and perish every moment; but as they are wonderfully provided for, and abundantly helped and pardoned. Thirdly, There is a state of rebuilding the stones, when they are prepared therefor, into a new building for the life to dwell in, and for their entrance into the land of life.

Quest. Declare these estates, and the exercises therein more plainly; and first show what is the estate of the soul in Egypt spiritually, when the Lord visiteth it there with his light.

Ans. An estate of deep bondage and groaning under the powers of darkness, whose bitter oppressions thereof increase, even as the sensibleness and tiredness of the soul increases. The soul then sees its captivity from the life, and finds a building of death and corruption raised up in it, in which the prince of darkness dwells and bears rule: and then, oh, how it groans and longs after departure from that land, and waits for the promise of redemption out of it! But yet it is still left in the hand of the enemy, and daily feels the bitter bondage, from the powerful law of sin and death springing up in the heart, and issuing out through the members.

Quest. How is faith and obedience here exercised?

Ans. In believing the promise, in waiting for the promise, in feeling some remote drawings of the life, and uniting therewith, so far as is possible in this dark, captivated estate. There is an acknowledgment of the true prince, and a bowing to him even in this estate of captivity, until he please to break the bands thereof, and receive under his guidance.

Quest. What is the estate of the wilderness spiritually?

Ans. It is an estate of waiting for the guidance of the leader; of receiving direction and laws from the leader; of following the leader as he pleaseth to lead, through the entanglements, temptations, straits, and necessities which he seeth fit to exercise the spirit with, for the wearing out of that which is not to inherit, and for preparing the heir for the inheritance.

Quest. How is faith and obedience here exercised?

Ans. In waiting on the light for the leadings in the law of life, and then in subjecting to the leader, being content with all his dispensations therein; with the time he chooseth for standing still, and with the time he chooseth for travelling on; with the proportion of light and leading that he judgeth fit, with the food and clothing which he prepares and preserves; with the enemies which he sees fit to have avoided or encountered with. Hereby the own wisdom, the own will, the own strength, the own desires, the own delights, with all the murmurings, weariness, and discontents, which arise from the earthly part, are by degrees worn out, and a pure vessel prepared for the pure birth to spring up and appear in.

Quest. What is spiritual Canaan, or the heavenly-built state, or state of the gospel?

Ans. A state of regenerating or renewing in the life and pure image; where the building is reared up which is made without hands; where there is a sweet and peaceable growth in the life, and a fresh and satisfactory enjoyment of the life.

Quest. How is faith and obedience here exercised?

Ans. In abiding in the vine, in drawing from the vine, in returning the sap and virtue back into the vine; and living according to the will, and in the free dispensation thereof. Thus works are excluded, with self, from whom they proceed, and the vine becomes all in all.

Quest. Are Egypt and the wilderness and Canaan, spiritually, as distinct estates as they were literally?

Ans. There are such distinct several estates spiritually, wherein a man may be spiritually in Egypt, and neither in the wilderness nor Canaan. So there is an estate in the wilderness, which is out of Egypt, and not in Canaan; and an estate in Canaan, which is beyond both Egypt and the wilderness. Yet these estates in spirit are oftentimes interwoven, with the exercises thereof; insomuch as the soul may, in part, or in some respect (to his own understanding), be in Egypt; in part in the wilderness, and in part in the rest, life, and peace. But these things are not to be curi-

ously sought into, lest a wrong wisdom and a knowledge get up; but abiding low and little in the little seed, the kingdom and everlasting inheritance grows daily in the soul, and the soul daily shoots up into it, and is enlarged in it.

Quest. Is there any return back into Egypt, or into the wilderness, after the state of the soul is advanced higher; the entrance into the everlasting inheritance being administered, and the soul partly taken into, and having found a place of rest in, the life?

Ans. The enemy lies near to deceive; and while he hath power to tempt, if there be a hearkening to his temptations, there is a departure from the pure life, and a return of the captivity or bewildering in some measure. In the faith and in the obedience to the light of life is the preservation; out of it is death and destruction eternally.

Quest. Is not the Pure Being untouched by death and destruction? And shall not the creature, when it is redeemed into him, be as he is?

Ans. The Pure Being cannot be impure, evil cannot enter upon him, it hath no place in him, his nature excluding it; nor can it enter into the principle of life that comes from him, and is always preserved by him; nor can it enter upon that man who is begotten of that principle, abideth with it, and is preserved in it. But so to be in him, as to abide and not go forth, is a great state, even higher than the first Adam knew.

Quest. But are not light and darkness, good and evil, all alike to God? And shall they not be so also to him, who is in perfect unity and fellowship with God?

Ans. All the light and darkness, good and evil, which can issue from the creature, cannot reach God's being as it is in itself, but only so far as he hath pleased to expose his life (in the various manifestations thereof) to be reached thereby. Yet his eye seeth the evil and the good; the perfection and the imperfection, and his nature is perfectly excluded from all evil and imperfection, insomuch as he cannot possibly lie or deceive, or be unrighteous or unmerciful

in any of his dispensations; and that which is gathered into him, is thus one with him. But that which can do any thing which is sinful and evil in itself, is not in the true unity with the eternal Being, but in the deceit of that spirit which erreth from him, and entereth the creature in the imagined likeness of his life and happiness.

Quest. How far may persons go, and yet be liable to the enemy's snare?

Ans. Very far. They may come out of Egypt; they may pass through the wilderness; they may receive an inheritance or portion in the holy land; they may have houses and vineyards which they builded not nor planted; they may have had deep draughts of the life, deep incomes of the love, large riches of the grace, and precious tastes of the fulness. They may have been in the Paradise of God; may have been anointed by God; may have stood upon his holy mountain, and walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, &c., and yet the enemy may have leave to tempt, and may find entrance for his temptation; advancing above his estate in the deceivableness, and increasing the glory in the eye of the wisdom which he steals in; and so hold the spirit captive in his golden chains, and lead it back again to the chambers of death.

Quest. How doth, or can, the enemy prevail over persons in so glorious an estate?

Ans. By opening a larger eye in them, than is given them in the life to see with. The eye of life is limited in man, and man is to be held within the limits and openings of life; and his heart and mind to be bounded within the desires and delights which arise from the life: he is to wait on the life, for its living, moving, and being all in his being: and here he shall be large enough, and full enough, and wise enough, and happy enough. But there is somewhat which presents to him a kingdom, a riches, a dominion, a vastness of perfection in himself, and at his own command; the which, he beginning to listen unto, the same opens an eye in him to see the beauty and glory thereof, and then immediately his heart is taken, and he cannot

avoid the snare; nor can he henceforth know where he is, until that which he hath forsaken again please to visit him, and to discover to him his iniquity and error from the true root.

Quest. What is the way of safety, when God enlargeth the territories of life in the soul, and causeth his love and grace to abound?

Ans. To drink the draughts of joy and sweetness in the pure fear and trembling; not departing therefrom in whatever it doth for God, or receives from him, till the salvation be wholly wrought out and perfected, the habitation of unspotted love prepared, and the soul led into, and seated in, its complete mansion therein. And then the name of fear is no more heard of in the land of life; though the principle from whence the fear sprang, and the birth and building (which was begotten, raised up, formed, and perfected in the fear) abideth for ever. So that the pure love doth not cast out the pure fear (wherein is no bondage of the life, but the preservation of the life from the bondage), but swallows it up and comprehends it. For the pure fear is but love descended, and the pure love is but fear ascended; the eternal principle or substance being one and the same in both.

Quest. Is there then such a place of safety, upon which the enemy cannot intrench?

Ans. There is a state of such union with the life, as the enemy cannot come between; where there is lying down and rising up in the power of the life, and no beast of prey can make afraid any more; nor can any root of bitterness spring up from within, to trouble or make any disturbance between the life and the soul any more.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

CONDUCING TOWARDS

THE FURTHER MANIFESTATION AND OPENING OF THE PATH OF REDEMPTION AND ETERNAL LIFE TO THE EYE OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL.

Quest. How doth the Son of God, or Eternal Word, in whom is the light of life, redeem man out of the fallen estate, out of the kingdom of darkness and death, into the kingdom of everlasting righteousness and peace in the life?

Ans. Three ways. First, By wounding him in the natural and corrupt estate, and so breaking his peace and pleasure in the kingdom of darkness, and making him weary thereof. Secondly, By weakening him under the teachings and chastisement of the law. Thirdly, By healing and binding him up with the oil of salvation, in the power of the endless life, which is the gospel.

Quest. How doth God wound him in the natural and corrupt state?

Ans. By pursuing him with his light, which letteth him see what it is, discovering the evil and danger of it, and so weaning his heart from it, and making him look out after, and long for, a redeemer. Oh! how burthensome is the captivity to the awakened soul, when he hath a glimpse of what man was before his fall, when he had a place and being in the life, with a spirit suitable to the life, and what he is now in his estate of estrangedness and alienation from the life; and whither he is going in his paths of unrighteousness, estrangedness, and alienation! And while his heart is thus returning from the land of death and captivity, and longing after the redeeming power and virtue of the life, the enemy—the power of darkness—lays loads up-

on him, drawing him more and more under the chains and bonds of iniquity to the utmost of its strength. So that now lusts abound, evils increase, temptations and snares multiply; and in the land of captivity their strength is great, the soul weak and faint, and the redeeming power and virtue seem very far off. Now this is the estate of conversion; when the Lord, in the midst of the powers of death and darkness, turns the heart from them towards himself, causing it to wait (under the captivity) for the appearance of the arm of his strength, to break the yoke of the oppressor from off the necks of the oppressed, and so to bring out of the land of death and darkness, into the travels towards the land of promise; where the peace, the life, the liberty in the Lord, the rest, the joy, the full content and happiness is reaped by the soul which follows the Lamb thither.

Quest. How doth God weaken the creature under the teachings and chastisements of the law?

Ans. By exercising him towards good and evil, and correcting him for his unbelief and disobedience, as he finds good, just, and necessary for him.

Quest. How doth God exercise him towards good and evil, and correct him?

Ans. When he hath brought him from under the power of darkness in some measure; and in some measure set the spirit free therefrom, by the virtue of his life springing up in the heart, then he exerciseth the heart and conversation towards the good and from the evil; then he giveth out laws for or against things, according as he findeth most proper to the estate of every particular soul. Now upon the giving forth of the law (the life being in some measure raised), there is that which loves its teachings and pure path, and there is that also which draws back from it; and that being yet strong, there come many strokes and chastisements from the Lord, upon his own dear child. And these are bitter; and to be forced into the sin which it loathes, and in heart is turned from; and to be kept from the good which it longs after, and in heart is united to (partly by the strength of the enemy, and partly by reason of its own

weakness and negligence), this is bitter also; insomuch as it crieth out day after day, and findeth this administration of the law almost as heavy a yoke as the land of captivity itself was, because of the weakness of it through the flesh, and the strength and advantages which the corruption of the heart and prince of darkness gather thereby.

Quest. What is the benefit of these exercises upon the soul?

Ans. They melt, they break, they make the heart tender and fit to be moulded by the eternal virtue and power, into a vessel for the power.

Quest. What frames of spirit do they work the heart or mind into?

Ans. Into very many precious ones. As for instance,

First, *They make the spirit poor.* The daily inroads of sin and corruption dashing against the holy and righteous law of life, the overbearing the strong desires after purity, and forcing into the defilement, hindering the soul from doing what it loves, and making it do what it hates and would not, this makes it become poorer and poorer, and more afflicted day by day. Upon some visitations of the pure life, and some fresh virtue received, oh, how strong doth the soul seem! but when it suddenly forfeits its mercies, loses its freshness, and is plunged deeper in the pit than before, how poor and weak doth it then feel itself, trembling at the next openings of the life, and springings up of the virtue thereof in it, not knowing what weakness, captivity, entanglements, and misery from the snares of death remain to follow!

Secondly, *They bring into a mourning estate.* They fill the eyes with tears, and the heart with sorrow; yea, they cause an entrance into *the house of mourning.* To be accustomed to wounds, bruises, snares, grieving of the Spirit, provoking of the deliverer, furthering and giving advantages to the enemy, &c., the sense of this overwhelms the heart with grief, and causeth continual sorrow and lamentation to that which is upright towards God.

Thirdly, *They bring into a meek, merciful, tender-hearted*

frame towards others. He that is tempted, he that often falls, and is so often wounded and made miserable, he pities those that err; he mourns over the miserable. His heart is broken with the sins and afflictions of others, and he knoweth not how to be hard towards them, feeling such continual need of abundant mercy himself. It is the rich man, the sound man in religion, that is rough and hard; but he that is once thoroughly melted in the furnace, and made up again, is made but tender, and retaineth the impression of the meekness, love, and mercy for ever. Now a broken estate in religion, or a state of waiting for the life, is much more precious than that which is rich and full by what it had formerly received, and still holdeth out of the immediate feeling and fresh virtue of the life.

Fourthly, *They bring into a hungry and thirsty state after holiness and righteousness.* Oh, how the soul that is sensible of its filth longeth to be washed! How it panteth after the pastures of life, the food of life, the living waters? to appear before and enjoy God, in the land of the living! Oh, how doth the heart, that is daily afflicted with its unbelief and disobedience, long for the faith that stands in the power, and the obedience that flows from the power! "Oh, teach me thy statutes; show me the pure path of obedience in the way of life; guide my feet in the way everlasting! Oh, write thy fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee; create a clean heart in me, and put thy Spirit within me to be my strength! Oh, continue thy loving-kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart!" Oh, what unutterable breathings daily issue out from the broken spirit, towards the spring of its life!

Fifthly, *They bring into a pure frame*, into a cleanness of inside. "Cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter," said Christ to the Pharisees; and he doth so in his disciples. "With the mind I serve the law of God," said Paul, when he cried out, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver?" It is not conceivable what purity of heart is formed by God in his Israel, by the fire which he kindleth in his

Zion, and by the furnace which he setteth up in his Jerusalem; for though in the furnace the dross still appears, the sight whereof is apt to grieve and afflict the precious heart, yet the melting and purifying sweetly go on, and the soul (which abideth the heat) is effectually cleansed thereby, as is very manifest afterwards, when righteousness springs up, with the quiet fruit thereof; but this cannot be discerned, while the flames are discovering and taking hold of the unrighteousness.

Sixthly, *They bring into a patient frame;* fit to bear reproaches and persecutions from the world, who, in the midst of all this weakness, misery, and distress, lay loads upon the poor soul, persecuting him whom God hath smitten, and speaking to the grief of him whom God hath wounded. God smites for want of obedience; for too much propensity to please the world; for not coming soon enough out of their customs, vanities, earthly ways and worships; and so soon as the heart and conversation are given up in obedience to the Lord, the world is discontent, and they smite and persecute because of the obedience. Now the more the spirit is broken by the hand of the Lord, and taught thereby to fear him; and the less strength it hath in itself, to grapple with the persecuting spirit of the world; the fitter it is to stand in God's counsel, to wait for his strength and preservation, which is able to bear up its head above all the rage and swelling of the waters of the worldly spirit in the men of this world.

Much more might be said, but this may suffice. What is behind will be felt inwardly, as the soul waits on God in the leadings of his Spirit, through the teachings, chastisements, and distresses of the law.

Quest. With what kind of things doth the Lord exercise the spirits of his Israel, to bring their hearts into these and such other like precious frames?

Ans. With several sorts and kinds of things, both outward and inward; as,

First, With oppositions, reproaches, and interruptions from the earthly part, both in the men of this world, and in

themselves. There is abundance within, and abundance without, to resist, disdain, and interrupt the work of God in the heart, to oppose and withstand that which he hath begotten there; his leadings of it, and its obedience to him.

Secondly, With temptations from the enemy, even of many kinds, natures, and degrees, according to the present temper and condition of the soul; as either to doubt, and so despair; or be confident in the flesh from knowledge received, out of the pure fear and fresh feeling of the life; so again, either to halt or draw back, or to be over-hasty and forward; so likewise, either not to obey and act for God, or to act in that will and wisdom which is against God. Now these, with such like, are very numerous, frequent, and sometimes very violent and impetuous.

Thirdly, By withdrawings of the life and sweet presence of God from the soul. These are very frequent from the Lord towards his people, insomuch as he is called by this title; "The God that hideth his face from the house of Jacob." Isa. viii. 17. chap. xlv. 15.

Fourthly, By buffetings and prevailings of the enemy. When the Spirit is grieved, the life wounded, and withdraws inward, the enemy often gets ground, giving wounds and causing bruises to the soul; not only tempting, but finding entrance, and taking in the snare the bird which once escaped, and was delivered.

Fifthly, By doubts, fears, and confused reasonings concerning the voice of God and the voice of the enemy. In the hour of darkness (when the Lord seeth good to let forth the power thereof, and to withdraw the beams of his light), how can that be clearly distinguished, which alone is known and seen in the light? How can the motions, drawings, and pure, low workings of the life, be discerned from the false images and transformings of the enemy? Oh, the misery and anguish of the poor soul in this condition! how is the poor, upright heart pained between faith and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, &c., not knowing when it is drawn forward or backward, or by whom.

Quest. When do these exercises begin? and how long do they continue?

Ans. The Lord doth begin to exercise the soul even in Egypt; for after the promise (of deliverance from spiritual Pharaoh) the bonds increase, the yoke grows more heavy, Pharaoh grows more violent and furious, the captivity increaseth much; but there is no sight of redemption at all, save to that eye which is weak, and easily overborne in Israel. But the exercises are much more full and sharp in the wilderness, where Israel is led about, tried, afflicted, consumed day by day, as if he should never come to the holy land, nor any of Israel be left to enter therein. Yea, in Canaan, in the rich possession, in the plenteous overflowings of the life, there is still somewhat left to try Israel, and bring him low with, if at any time he be exalted with the glory and fulness of his own estate, and begin to forget his God.

Quest. Why doth God thus exercise his Israel? Why doth he lead them in such a knotty, and not in a more easy and ready way to the everlasting possession, and to the fulness thereof?

Ans. Because their estate and condition require it. They could not be so purified and fitted for the life; their vessels would not be so enlarged to receive it in, nor they so safely enjoy it, were it not for this course of wisdom, wherein God exercises and trieth every cranny of their spirits, until he hath perfected them, and stopped up the entrance of death everywhere.

Quest. How do these exercises purify and enlarge them?

Ans. First, They try the strength and virtue of the life in them, and discover to them their further want thereof. In the time of the soul's prosperity there seems to be enough; but the day of distress maketh manifest the estate and condition as it is. Then the faith, the love, the patience, the meekness, the constancy, and chasteness to the spouse (loving him, and cleaving to him, above all, and in all) many times are found to be less than they were judged to be.

Secondly, It brings to a waiting on God for support, and for receiving of more from him. Then the life breathes vigorously, and the soul hankers after, cleaves to, and sees its need both of the presence and increase of the virtue of the life. Then he that was rich becomes poor, and he that was full becomes empty and nothing; yea, he that had enough to live on and to spare, is now pressed with hunger, want, and penury.

Thirdly, It prepares for a clearer entrance into, and safer enjoyment of, the fulness; As the soul is more emptied of the strength and riches it received from God; so it is more prepared to enter into, and live in, the Pure Being itself. For nothing can live there which veils. In the life God was, and is, and is to be all in all for ever. That, therefore, which enters there, and lives and abides there, must be poor, empty, naked, nothing, and remain nothing for ever. As it gathers any thing from the fulness, and becomes any thing in itself, thereby it is shut out.

Quest. How doth God heal and bind up that which he hath wounded and broken to pieces with his various and frequent exercises?

Ans. By opening the power of the endless life, in the vessel which he hath thoroughly purified and prepared, and filling it with the power. The free power of life, that is the gospel. To the meek, to the broken-hearted, to the cleansed it is prophesied; and when the work of cleansing is finished, the wound made wide enough, and kept open long enough, and the death to the first husband fully accomplished, then the perfect oil is perfectly poured in, and everlasting health and salvation obtained. This is the end which God aims at in the visitations and leadings of his seed; happy are they that pass through the vale of misery, and drink off the dregs of the "cup of trembling," not fainting nor sitting down by the way, but following the faithful Shepherd and Leader of Israel, till they arrive here.

Quest. What is the great danger in the path of life?

Ans. The great danger is of ascending a step higher than the present estate and condition will bear; for by this means

the aspiring mind gets up, and is exalted, and holdeth somewhat received from the life, out of the pure fear which preserves the heart clean, and out of the sensible feeling which keepeth fresh and living to God. And then the simplicity is betrayed, and a wrong spirit lives, and a wrong eye is opened; so that there is nothing now but whoredom from the life, and the heart exalted and conceited in the way of its whoredoms, as if it were the pure bed and most excellent way of enjoyment of the life.

Quest. What way is there of preservation herefrom?

Ans. Watching to the life, keeping low in the fear, and close to the feeling. Here the aspirer is shut out, or soon espied at his beginning to enter, and then the living cross received, which crucifieth and driveth him back. And indeed there is no way of safety in the travels towards the enjoyment of life, or under any enjoyment before the state of perfect death, but under the cross to that spirit and nature which would dwell there, and please itself therewith, and be somewhat therein, and so forget the pure everlasting spring, adulterating with the streamings forth of it.

Man was made for God to be a vessel of his pleasure, to receive his content, enjoyment, and happiness by reflection. So that man's proper work was to watch to the spring from whence he came; to be disposed of, ordered, and to be according to his pleasure. This was natural to man before his fall, till a corrupt spirit by deceit entered him, and corrupted him. And while any thing of that corrupt spirit or fallen nature remains, he is apt to aspire in the self-hood, and to seek the enjoyment of what comes from the fountain (yea, and the fountain itself also) in and according to the will and wisdom of the self-hood. And here let man receive what gifts soever from God, be advanced to ever so high a habitation in the land of life, yea, have the very fountain itself given him; yet by this means he will corrupt, lose the gift or spring, be separated from it, and adulterate with what he can still retain or gather in his own principle. And here do deep travellers lose their way, falling from their portion in the land of life, and from their enjoyments

in the paradise of the pleasure of the life, into the earthly and sensual spirit, holding things wisely and richly there in the earthly principle, not knowing the remove of their habitation thither, nor thinking that they are there.

He that readeth these things, let him not strive to comprehend them; but be content with what he feeleth thereof suitable to his own present estate: and as the life grows in him, and he in the life, and he comes to meet with the things and exercises spoken of, the words and experiences concerning them will of themselves open to him, and be useful and serviceable to him so far as the Lord pleaseth, he keeping to the leadings, savor, and principle of life in himself, wherein alone his knowledge, sight, growth, and experiences are safe.

Now he that would travel safely in spirit unto the land of life, let him wait to have these things following written by the finger of God in his heart, and the sense and impression thereof preserved fresh in him.

First, It is the free grace of God which begins the work of redemption, which causeth the light to shine, which worketh the repentance or turning from the dead state, and also the belief in, and turning towards, the living God.

Secondly, It is the same grace alone that can preserve and cause the plant of grace to grow. If there be a withdrawing of the light, a withholding of the free influence, that which depends thereupon cannot retain its freshness; which the Lord may do as often as he pleaseth, for the chastisement of the rebellious part, or for the trial of his pure life and virtue in his plants.

Thirdly, The grace of God visiting the soul in the death, in the darkness, in the fallen estate, begetteth life anew in it, maketh it in some measure light in the Lord, openeth an eye in it to see the things of God, an ear to hear and distinguish between the sound of life and of death, a heart to turn from and refuse the vanity, and to turn towards and abide in the living substance.

Fourthly, The Spirit of God carries on the work of redemption, by drawing, leading, and acting the quickened

soul: by exercising that which he hath begotten in the life, under the law of the life. Thus the life draws the soul daily nearer and nearer towards the everlasting spring, and from the fading emptiness of sin, vanity, and the creature-hood; and the soul, by the enlivening virtue, daily follows on after the life, in the leadings, spirit, and power thereof. There is a living soul begotten by the virtue of the grace, and the living soul daily lives in the grace, and travels in the virtue thereof from the unbelief to the faith, from the enmity to the love, from the perverseness to the straitness, from the iniquity to the righteousness, even from all the territories of the darkness, and also from the weak measures and degrees of the grace and life towards the fulness itself, even until it perfectly centre in, and be fully filled therewith.

Fifthly, Where there is a stopping of the virtue received from the grace, and not an answer in the heart, there the work of redemption is stopped. If the soul follow not in the drawing, the drawing is lost, as to it. If the ear open not to hear the voice of the Word, or if it be not mixed with faith in the heart hearing, it proves ineffectual. If strength issue forth from the Lord, yet if the soul receive not the strength which issueth forth and bubbleth up in it, or answer it not in giving up to it, and travelling on, the soul abideth where it was at least, if it also retire not backward from that estate and condition whereto the life had advanced it: for if the virtue of the life and grace be refused, there is an advantage given to death to re-enter, and gain ground by its contrary virtue and power.

Sixthly, Mark therefore diligently how the Lord doth carry on the dispensation of his love and free grace, even as if there were much done by the strength and diligence of the creature. What wounding of itself by repentance! what striving to believe! what wrestling against enemies, and for the influences of the grace, and to keep the hope up, and the distrust out! What strict watching and waiting, even as if the creature did work out its whole salvation!

Seventhly, Though the creature seemeth to do much it-

self (having received life from the grace, and acting abundantly towards God in the grace), yet it is the grace and virtue which comes from the Creator (who is also the Redeemer) which indeed doth all: for though the creature repent really, and turn from the darkness with its whole heart, yet the repentance is of the virtue which flows from the grace, and not of the creature which receives the grace: and so likewise in the faith, the love, the obedience, the meekness, the patience, the watching, the waiting, the hoping, &c. Yea, the very receiving the grace is not of the creature, but of the grace: for the creature is dead until it be visited by the grace: and by the visitation of the grace alone is made alive, and able to receive it.

Behold then the *mystery of redemption.* God is all in redemption; God doth all therein as fully as in creation (it is a new creation) even the whole work thereof; yet the creature quickened and renewed is in unity with him in his operations. Phil. ii. 12, 13. He whose eyes are opened can read the mystery, and in true understanding say (if he hath been led, and hath proceeded so far), "I am able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me; yet not I, but the grace of God in me." Now to bring the creature to this, the Lord exerciseth it daily in obedience unto him, in the life and virtue which floweth forth from him, causing it to feel its weakness as it forgets the virtue, or aspires to live of itself on the virtue received, out of the sensible feeling of its dependence upon the spring. And indeed the virtue that comes from God can alone answer God, and the creature is only accepted with the Spring and Father of life, as it is found therein.

Quest. But if the work of redemption be wrought by God's creating power, how cometh it to meet with so many rubs and interruptions, and sometimes overturnings? Can any thing stop God's creating power?

Ans. So far as God absolutely pleaseth to create, nothing can stop or hinder; but the entrance of that which he beginneth to create into the creature, and its getting a being there, as also the growth and preservation of it there, may

be hindered by the force of spiritual enemies, if the Lord pleases to permit; or by the grieving and provoking of that free power, which alone begetteth and preserveth life in the heart.

Obj. Then the work of redemption is not carried on by an absolute, free-creating power.

Ans. The creating power and preserving power is the same; but the work is somewhat different, both in the outward, visible creation, and inward, new creation. The preservation of that which is created and planted (unto its growth and perfection) is by the same power which created and planted; but rather in a way of care, industry, art, and skill, than of such immediate force and power, though by the exercise and putting forth of the same virtue and power.

There are three things in redemption:

First, There is the issuing out of the free grace, love, virtue, and divine power towards the creature.

Secondly, There is the opening of the estate of the creature thereby, convincing and drawing it out of the alienation from the life, towards unity with the life.

Thirdly, There is the following of the creature after the life, in the quickening virtue of the drawings, through all the snares, temptations, diversions and oppositions of the enemy.

Now there is no hindering of the issuing forth of the free grace towards the creature, or of those convictions and inclinations of the creature to follow, which necessarily ensue thereupon. But the pursuit and progress of the creature (or its abiding with the quickening virtue and power) may many ways be interrupted and diverted, and so the creature drawn from under the influence of the free covenant; for though the covenant be free, yet the creature only partakes of it, as it is drawn into it, and preserved in it.

Therefore let those fear who feel the power and redeeming virtue, and know, that notwithstanding the free and certain promise to the seed, yet the creature is as clay in the hands of the potter, which may be made a vessel of honor or dishonor, as he pleaseth to favor it, or take occasion

against it. And whoever would pass through the work of salvation and redemption, unto the salvation and redemption itself, in the living virtue received from the life, let him keep fast hold on the good pleasure, and in it give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, working out his salvation with fear and trembling, because God worketh in him both to will and to do of his good-will. And walking diligently and industriously in this path, he may attain the seal of the redemption, even that mark which can never be worn out, and to full assurance of faith in the redeeming power; though it is also possible for him afterwards, through much negligence and grieving of the Spirit whereby he was sealed, to lose the sight of the mark, and the comfort of the assurance, which was once fresh and clear in his spirit.

For a close at this time, I shall add a few words concerning the unity of God's grace (or free light of his spirit) notwithstanding the various estates and conditions of man whom it visits, and the variety of its operations.

There is a three-fold state of man, wherein the grace of God visits him.

First, The gentile state, or state of nature.

Secondly, the Jew state, or administration of the law, wherein God takes him under his own tuition, making known his will to him, and requiring obedience of him: and not only so, but also directs him to the inward teacher, and to the principle of the pure fear, which is the place of wisdom's teaching and instructions.

Thirdly, The gospel-state, or state of faith, where the principle is raised, the seed lives, and that is felt springing up, known, and enjoyed, which does the will, and receives the promise.

Now in all these, the law, the light, the life, the wisdom, the power, are one and the same; but the administrations are different.

In the Gentile state, or state of nature, the light which

man receives there (to discover evil, and work him into good) is of the Spirit, and by virtue of the promise. For he had been everlastingly shut up in the darkness, had it not been for the promise; and it is for the promise' sake, and from the free-grace, that he hath any visitation in the state of nature, and any desires after, or leadings towards, the good, and from the evil; which spring not, nor can spring, from corrupted nature; but from the free fountain of the new life.

In the law-state, the light grows more clear; the teacher is there discerned and acknowledged; his drawings, warnings, instructions, and reproofs felt more distinctly, and the soul (that is watchful) continually exercised therein.

In the gospel-state, the principle of life is raised, the promised seed come, the power which doth the will received, and the light of life entering into, and possessing the vessel.

Now this is the whole of man, to wait on the ministration of the life to him in his present estate, whether he be yet in the estate of nature, or under the law, or under grace. To know whence his redemption springs, and to wait on the redeeming arm for the beginnings, progress, and perfecting of it; and if it be in the feeling of that virtue, it is enough; or if it be kept longing or panting after it, it is well; yea, if there be but a desire in him after a thirst, there is hope; nay, if there be but the least feeling of his dead, barren, and senseless estate, there is some life in him, which the Lord loves, and will find a time to express his bowels towards: yea, that which is wholly in the darkness, and shut up in the pit, the Lord hath bowels in him towards, and after many days may please to visit. Oh, the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of the riches of the mercy and love of God! Who knows his yearning towards souls, and his ways of visiting and redeeming! O my soul! hope thou in the Lord for evermore, and leave not breathing towards him, till thou and his whole creation be filled and satisfied with him, and then fetch the full breath of life in him for ever.

POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE been treating of the inward work, as it is wrought in the heart by the power, and brought to the sensible, experimental knowledge of the creature; yet would not be so understood as if I made void what was done without by Christ in his own person, or any of those ends and purposes for which it was wrought, and appointed so to be done by the Father: though this I know, that the knowledge of those things, with the belief therein, or any practices and observations therefrom, without the life, can no more profit now, than the Jews' literal knowledge of the law could profit them, when they were rejected therewith. And since the apostasy, of this latter age especially, I have clearly seen in the Spirit of the Lord, that the professors' knowledge of the letter of the gospel, and cleaving to their apprehensions which they gather therefrom, is become a snare and trap to them, to keep them from feeling the power, and living in the sensibility of the virtue of the grace; even as the Jews' table (or gathered knowledge from Moses and the prophets) became their snare and trap. The Lord open their eyes in his due time to discern it, that they may not withstand that ministration and revelation of his everlasting gospel, which God seeth good to visit the apostatized world with, after this long, dark night of apostasy! whereof those that stick in forms, or knowledge of things in the letter, without the power, cannot but prove the greatest enemies, opposers, and persecutors.

Now to help them a little, if the Lord please; in the rolling of my bowels towards them I find my heart opened, to lay a few things before them.

First, With my heart, in the sight of the Lord, do I own that principle which formerly wrought in some of them, which I myself was wrought upon by, and knew not only the outward knowledge which they were acquainted with, but also the inward work: and I also knew what I called

the light of nature, and what I called the light of the Spirit, the one whereof was not the other, but differed as far as Spirit and flesh.

Secondly, I also own all the openings and refreshments which they received from the Lord in reading of the Scriptures in their public or private exercises, and the experiences which they had from God in their own hearts: and I know that these things in themselves were true in their proportion; however the present sense, and holding of them out of that wherein they received them, may justly be judged by the Spirit of the Lord in his servants.

Thirdly, Though those things were true in their day, and in their proportion and measure; yet in them they might lose their virtue, and die, and so they not retain the thing in its life, in its own principle, in the newness of the Spirit, in that birth to which God gave it; but only an image of it in the natural understanding, in the earthly part, in the dead principle; and then their knowledge of God and their experiences cannot but be corrupted, and now become the possession of death, and the engines of death in their hearts. Again, God had somewhat further to manifest, even to bring forth that which they earnestly prayed for in that day; which they, having abode in that virtue wherein they prayed, might easily have discerned and embraced; but being out of that, and pleasing themselves with the literal knowledge of the things they then received, holding them in the wise and earthly part, that part cannot but stumble at the low and contemptible appearances of God, which are still offensive to that part. The great glory of God is hid in a little seed; and how can the great eye of the fleshly-wise see it? We have Moses and the prophets (said the Jews after the flesh), but as for this man, we know not whence he is. Even so it is now: we know the relation which the Scriptures have given of Christ by the apostles, we are sure this is of God, say the professors; but as for this little seed of the kingdom, or light of God in the heart, we cannot believe that all we want is to spring up in it.

Now, Fourthly, There is a necessity both of the knowl-

edge of persons to pass away, and also of their experiences to be given up, and let fall, in these two cases following:

First, When the virtue is withdrawn from them, when death hath caught them, when they become death's goods: for that which is received from the life is only profitable to the soul in the virtue of the life. When the earthly part hath caught them, and seated itself there, they then become the strong-holds of the enemy, and the engines of death to the heart; so that then life and true relief are not to be had in them, but where the eternal virtue pleases next to appear.

Secondly, When God hath somewhat to bring forth further in the world, or in any particular heart, to make way for it he brings death upon that which was before living. Thus when God is pleased to *bring forth a greater measure of faith, and power of his Spirit*, he distresseth the heart, making the foregoing faith and power appear weak, and pass away; and many times for a season shutteth up the soul in the unbelief, until the fresh faith and fresh power spring up and arise. And this causeth the necessity of the further dispensations of his eternal virtue to appear, and the beauty of them to shine; which they would not have done so abundantly, had it not been for the foregoing distress of the heart.

There are yet some things further weighty upon my heart to lay before them, needful for them to consider of, which may be serviceable and helpful to them in their present condition, if the Lord please to open their hearts, and impress them thereon. They are four propositions, relating to the right knowledge of the things of God, which are these following:

First, That the knowledge of the things of God comes from the Spirit. As the Scriptures themselves came from the Spirit, so the true knowledge of them is alone given, to any man which receiveth it, by the same Spirit. And no man living can know the mind of the words which the Spirit spake, but as the same Spirit which spake them, gives the meaning of them.

Secondly, That the knowledge of God (the living knowl-

edge, the serviceable knowledge) is alone held in the Spirit, and in the birth which is of the Spirit. Man's natural part is not the true treasury, nor is man's reason to be master of any of the things of God's Spirit; but that which holds the knowledge of the kingdom, the grace of the kingdom, the living experiences, is that which is born of the seed of the kingdom; and man's reason is for ever to be shut out of the things of God, further than it bows, is limited, and subjected.

Thirdly, That the knowledge received from the Spirit, is still to be tried by the Spirit. The Spirit alone can keep it living, and the Spirit alone can tell whether the life and virtue be still in it, or whether death hath caught it; whether it be the manna fit for the soul's food, or manna once given, but now corrupted. O! my dear friends, wait to understand my experience concerning this thing, which is this:— That which I had certainly received from God, and which the true birth at first had fed on, the earthly birth would be catching at, laying hold of, and treasuring up to feed on at another time. Likewise in my reading of the Scriptures, I lay open to this great snare, of reading in my own will, and gathering from thence in mine own understanding, and so growing wise concerning the things of God after the flesh: for though at that time I was not without living knowledge and experiences of God, yet I knew not how to turn from the death, nor to keep to the life; and so the bad, the lean, the earthly, the ill-favored, overgrew the good and well-pleasing to God, and brought it into bitter misery and death. Oh that ye knew being begotten of the will of the Father, and keeping to the will of the Father, and receiving the bread daily from his hand! That which man conceiveth concerning the Scriptures, is not the pure milk of the Word, but that which the breasts give out; that is it which hath the immediate life, virtue, and true nourishment in it. And this must be returned back into the treasury, and not held in the earthly part, in the earthly will and understanding, but received from the life again when it is again needed; yea, this have I often known, that when I have

been in great distress, I have received fresh comfort from the Lord; but running to that afterwards, it never was able to comfort me, but more deeply wounded me. And thus hath the Lord been teaching me to live upon himself, and not upon any thing received from him, but upon the life itself, the mercy, the good pleasure, which proportions out the living bread daily to the living birth.

Fourthly, It is easy receiving of knowledge in the earthly part, in the earthly wisdom, out of the Spirit and living virtue. When one readeth a scripture, it is easy conceiving and apprehending a meaning one's self, or taking in another man's meaning; but it is hard abstaining from all conceivings and reasonings of the mind, and waiting for the pure will and opening of the Spirit therein. Also it is easy retaining of knowledge, and making use of it in the will and wisdom of the earthly mind, for both these are natural: but it is hard denying the reason, the thoughts and imaginations, and watching to the Spirit.

O professors! wait for the living appearance of God, even for the freshness of his Spirit in your spirits; that in that which cometh from the Spirit ye may know the Spirit, and may also know how to turn to him and abide with him, having the watch set against that wisdom in yourselves, which in all ages and generations is eternally shut out of the things of the kingdom, although it may gather, get, and hold a vast knowledge of the things of the kingdom in the earthly treasury. Thus fleshly Israel hath the wisdom of the letter; but spiritual Israel the wisdom, virtue, and life of the Spirit in all ages and generations. And though he that is born after the flesh despiseth him who is born after the Spirit, yet this is God's heir; and the bond-woman, the earthly wisdom, with all her children (even the greatest giants in knowledge, profession of religion, and scripture observations), must be cast out, and not inherit the land of life. This is written that that might be raised in you by the power, which is to inherit the life eternal; and ye not find your souls deceived, when the light of that day fully opens, which hath already dawned.

I was in a poor, low condition, when the Lord formerly visited me; as lost, as undone, as miserable as any. What knowledge, what life, what precious virtue I then received, was from God's grace; which was still his own, and he might call for it at his pleasure. And surely, he which hath received from the founatin, ought to trust and to give back again to the fountain, when he calleth for it; and then to remain empty, naked, desolate, until he be again freely visited. This is a hard lesson, who can learn it? Who can trust his life with the fountain, and lie open to what follows? Yet this did the Lord require of me; and my heart being not willing to part with my life, but striving to retain it, and grow in the first way of the dispensation of the grace unto perfection, he brake it after an unutterable manner, and brought such misery and desolation upon me as I could not possibly have suspected, having been sealed by him. And now he is teaching me to live more fully upon his grace, or rather upon the spring, where I am nothing, where I can be nothing for ever: but he is and will be what he will be, and when he will be; and nothing in me can be satisfied with him, but what is of him, and lives in him. And here all that I have known, or formerly tasted of him, springs up again at his pleasure; and I drink of the old wine, and also of the new, but have nothing at my own disposal. And when I catch at any thing, or would be any thing, I lose the spring, and am corrected for my backsliding and adultery of spirit, but am still again visited with fresh love, and the springings up of fresh power and life, and fresh visitations of the rich mercy and grace, which the everlasting fountain naturally openeth in its own. The pearl is exceeding rich, the treasure of life unutterable; and he that will possess it, must sell all for it: even all his lusts and corruptions; yea, all the riches of his nature (the best of his will, the best of his wisdom most refined); nay not only so, but all the riches of his spirit, all that he hath held, or can hold out of the life. Then, when he is poor in spirit, and hath nothing in himself but emptiness, nothing so much as to receive or retain the life, but what is formed,

groweth up in, and is preserved in the life, according to its own mere will and good pleasure; then alone is he fit to be comprehended and brought forth in the eternal spring. Perfectly happy is he who is perfectly possessed thereof; yet he is not without a proportion of blessedness also, who is mourning after it and travelling towards it; which can never be attained by the natural part retaining the letter of any spiritual revelation or knowledge; but only by beginning in the eternal virtue, abiding in it, and travelling from death to death, and from life to life; till all be slain which is to die and perish in the way, and all be raised and perfected which is to receive, and live in the kingdom and crown of life for ever; which the Lord lays before all to run after, but none but the spiritual seed (begotten of and abiding in the Spirit) can obtain. Mind then this brief sum.

The lost creature, the undone creature, is graciously sought after and visited by the fountain of its life and being.

Being visited with the mercy and grace, and impressed, it receiveth somewhat of the grace and living virtue from the fountain.

Having received somewhat, the creature is apt to retain it in the creaturely vessel (even in the own will, and to enlarge the own wisdom thereby, and so to become somewhat again in itself), forgetting the spring.

As the creature retaineth any thing in the natural part, out of the immediate feeling of the living virtue, it corrupts, it adulterates from the living spring.

And that which any one hath thus adulterated with, must be taken from him, and he be made dead to it, and it to him, before he can be recovered into a living state, fit to enjoy what he formerly received, or further to receive of, and grow up in, the fresh, living virtue.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

SHOWING

MAN HIS DUTY,

AND POINTING

HIM TO THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD IN HIS HEART;

WHICH IS

THE ROOT OF LIFE IN ALL ITS DISPENSATIONS,
AND WHICH, BEING KEPT TO, IS ABLE TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF
LIFE IN EVERY DISPENSATION.

AS ALSO

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

CONCERNING

THE SEED OF JACOB AND THE TRUE CHURCH.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

Vol. II.— 25

PREFACE.

THE goodness of God endureth for ever. And though his creature man (who should have been subject and obedient to him) hath sinned against him, and by motions and inclinations of his own will and wisdom (out of the principle of his pure life, which was to have been his guide and governor) hath fallen short of his glory; yet he still pleaseth to visit his poor lost creature with loving-kindness and mercy, and with various dispensations of his life, according to his pleasure. What man is there that hath not received a soul from the breath of the Almighty? And what soul is it that hath not some visitations of life from that living breath? The bowels of eternity most naturally roll towards all its offspring; who seeketh the gathering of them all in the variety, and according to the limitations of his will, in his pure wisdom.

There is a current or stream of life before the promise is known, which secretly visits all, discovering the darkness in some measure unto all, and drawing from it. And happy is he who falls in with, and follows the leadings of the Almighty here; for then he cannot abide in the darkness, but still (according to the need of his condition) will meet with a true guide out of it, and with the true power which redeemeth and delivereth from it. For as the promise made to Adam, had relation to all his posterity; so whoever is visited with any light by virtue of the promise, that light will lead him to the promise, and he (in the obedience thereof) will meet with the sweetness and virtue of the promise. So that the lowest dispensation of God (the creature being exercised therein, feeling the want of God's power, and drawn to depend upon him for mercy and strength) will lead fallen man back again to his Maker, by the virtue which flows into man from the promise, though

ever so secretly and hiddenly. For it is not the distinct knowledge of the promise, (though that is a very great advantage) but the virtue flowing from the promise, which saves. Man being touched by that virtue, and by the touch thereof quickened towards God; and in that virtue which comes from the redeeming mercy, cleaving to his Maker, and hoping in his tender bowels, and feeling the weakness, insufficiency, and corruption of his own will and understanding, and so going forth from himself towards the spring which quickened him. Here is Christ known in spirit, received in spirit, believed and relied on in spirit, and his living virtue already felt, and further waited for. And can this man, thus walking, thus believing, thus obeying, thus cleaving to the principle which gives life, thus receiving virtue from it, and growing up (in that virtue) out of the self-hood, into it; I say, can this man miss of eternal life, which runs along in all the streamings forth of this living virtue?

But oh, how sweet is the stream of life in the sensible manifestation of the promise! He who feels the covenant in Christ, and life streaming into his heart through the covenant, and the seal of eternal peace to his soul, and that he shall never be left nor forsaken by the fountain of mercy, but all that ever befalls him shall conduce towards the working out of the perfect redemption and salvation of his soul; this is a precious state indeed; and this is the state which the feeling of the faith, and the living obedience in the Spirit leads to. Happy are they that walk in the path thereof, who content not themselves with man's knowledge of Christ, with man's belief of the things written concerning him, with man's obedience to the precepts left on record by the apostles, but whose living soul cannot be satisfied without the feeling and pressing after Christ, the life, and without a true engrafting into him in spirit, through the living Word, or testimony of life, received into, and believed on in the heart.

And how sweet also is the ministration of the law, which comes from the promise, and is managed to the soul by the

hand of the Mediator! How sweet is it to see the creature fall daily! to find one's own strength to believe, to obey, to suffer, to abide with Christ, to wait on Christ, to hope for Christ, daily battered and brought to nothing, and no life left but what issues from the spring, and is alone maintained by the free current thereof into the heart daily! Here the stroke of the law is received by degrees unto perfect death. Here are the openings of the pure prophecies in the Spirit concerning a new kingdom, a new birth, a new heir, a new life. Here is the axe laid to the root of the tree, and that cut down in the heart which is not to live, and which hinders the heir from his inheritance. Here is the vale of tears; which tears spring from the life, whose virtue washeth away the corruptible day by day. Here is the house of mourning, and that state of darkness entered into, which swallows up all the joy of the dark, earthly spirit, and consumes its nature. Here the light of life is sown, and through these exercises it springs up; and after the passing away of this ministration, breaks forth in strength upon that soul which hath been thoroughly exercised herein.

I desire the good of all mankind, waiting for the swallowing up of the dispensations of death, and the breaking forth of life upon them in the seasons thereof, according to the good pleasure of him whose gift life is, and whose are all the dispensations of it. And in that love, through the openings and drawings of life in me, have I writ what follows; not to upbraid or strike at any, but to be an help unto such as the Lord shall please to make it serviceable to. Wait on the Lord, eye him, read in fear, praying to be touched by, and gathered into, that which gives the feeling of the weight of truth. Oh, that men's souls were awakened, that they might know what it is to perish from God, and what to be saved by him! The proper portion of man's soul is the fountain of eternal life; and he can never be happy (nor in true rest, peace, or joy) while separated from it. Let him who is not brutish in understanding, and whose soul is not wholly dead God-wards consider this.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

SHOWING MAN HIS DUTY.

Quest. WHAT is the proper work of man here in this world?

Ans. To fear God, and keep his commandments. This is all that God requires of him, and this is enough to make him happy.

Quest. What is God?

Ans. The fountain of beings and natures, the inward substance of all that appears; who createth, upholdeth, consumeth, and bringeth to nothing, as he pleaseth.

Quest. How may I know that there is a God?

Ans. By sinking down into the principle of his own life, wherein he revealeth himself to the creature. There the soul receiveth such tastes and knowledge of him, as cannot be questioned by him that abideth there.

Quest. What is it to fear this God?

Ans. The spirit and soul of the creature standing in awe of his nature, and waiting to be kept in due subjection thereto; this is to fear him, and this is the proper means of preserving the spirit of the creature right in its motion towards him, attendance upon him, and expectations from him.

Quest. What are his commandments?

Ans. They are such as are either general to all mankind, common to some sorts of men, or proper to particular persons.

Quest. What are those which are general to all mankind?

Ans. They are very many; but may all be referred to these two heads; to wit, *To love God above all, and one's neighbor as one's self*; even so in every respect doing to him, as one would be done to by him in the like case.

Quest. How may man perform these?

Ans. Only by receiving a principle of life from God, and keeping close thereto.

Quest. How may a man come by a principle of life from God?

Ans. God is near to every man with the breath of his life, breathing upon him at times according to his pleasure; which, man's spirit opening unto, and drinking in, it becometh a seed or principle of life in him, overspreading and leavening him up to eternal life.

Quest. What hinders man from receiving this principle of life, and from keeping close thereto?

Ans. A fleshly principle, which is contrary to the knowledge, fear, and obedience of the Lord, and to all that springs from the principle and power of his life.

Quest. How comes this fleshly principle to be found in man?

Ans. It was sown there by the enemy of man's soul; man giving him entrance into his spirit, by hearkening to his suggestions and allurements.

Quest. What help hath man against this fleshly principle?

Ans. None of himself; but being freely touched by the other principle, and tasting thereof, he is to wait on God's mercy and grace for the manifestation of his light and power, to discover to him the evil nature and course of his own heart, and to cut down the corrupt desires, reasonings, and imaginations thereof.

Quest. In what way is this effected upon the heart?

Ans. In the heart's belief of this principle, and in its obedience thereto.

Quest. How may a man come to believe in this principle?

Ans. In feeling its nature, in waiting to feel somewhat begotten by it; in this its light springs, its life springs, its love springs, its hidden power appears, and its preserving wisdom and goodness are made manifest to the soul that clings to it in the living sense, which its presence and appearance begets in the soul.

Quest. How may a man come to obey this principle?

Ans. In the faith, in the eying of it, in the clinging to it, the strength issues from it into the creature, which maketh it able to perform all that it calleth for.

Quest. How come persons to be so weak, and to complain so much for want of power, who feel a true beginning of life, and earnest breathings after God?

Ans. From the enemy's interposing of reasonings between them and their faith. The darkness, the principle of unbelief, lies near, and is still raising mud (as much as possible) between the principle of life and the soul: and so far as it can come between, it disturbeth both the motions of the soul towards its spring or principle of life, and also the spring's clear bubbling up in, and running through the soul.

Quest. What is to be done in this case?

Ans. The soul is to wait God's seasons of deliverance from these, and to hope for a hidden support from his grace, while the visitations and leadings of his life are not made manifest.

Quest. What ground is there for this hope?

Ans. There is ground of hope for the creature in God's goodness; who naturally loveth and seeketh after the souls which he hath made, and doth not readily nor easily cast off in any of his dispensations. Besides, where he hath begotten somewhat, and where the bent of the heart is towards him, and the desire after his pure life and spirit above all things kindled, there hath he laid the foundation of a building, which, though at present it may lie in the dust, and under heaps of ruins, he cannot forget.

Quest. Are there other commands besides these common to all men?

Ans. Yes; according to that dispensation of life and mercy unto which they are called, and into which they are admitted by the love and kindness of God, which overspreadeth all his works, and who forgetteth not his creatures in their estate of separation and alienation from him.

Quest. Are there then more dispensations of life and mercy than one?

Ans. Yes. For though the life and mercy in itself is but

one; yet it hath several ways of seeking out after, and gathering into itself, the lost sons of Adam.

Quest. What have been the chief ways of dispensing the light of life towards mankind?

Ans. First, By a secret shining into their hearts. Thus the soul of the Lord holdeth forth some beams of his eternal light to all mankind, according to his pleasure, at some time or other visiting the darkest corners of the earth, and making some way therein for the scattering of that darkness which separates the soul from the light of life, and from the sweet presence and enjoyment of its Creator, which naturally flows into every soul in its believing and obeying of that light.

Quest. Were ever any thus gathered to the Lord?

Ans. The Lord is able to make any dispensation of his life effectual. And as many of the Jews were not gathered by the law, so many of the Gentiles might be gathered without the law.

Quest. But the law gave the knowledge of the Messiah to come through faith, in whom was the remission of sins known, and strength against sin.

Ans. The knowledge of Christ runs along in all the dispensations of the eternal light: the light cometh from him, and it manifests him in spirit; and the remission by his blood is spiritually known in the soul feeling the living virtue thereof. The law and the gospel are both known in spirit, wherever the eternal light visiteth, and is received.

Quest. What are the commands common to those?

Ans. They are known to those who are thus gathered, who, in the life thus dispensed, feel the leadings of it, and in its light are sensible of those requirings which universally stream forth from it among those that are thus gathered.

Quest. What other way of dispensing the light of life hath there been?

Ans. That of the promise to the fathers, which was before the law, wherein they saw the day of the Messiah, and were glad. This was a glorious dispensation, in which they

tasted the Sonship, and felt power to walk with God, and faith to trust him in his leadings, and were translated by him (in a sweet and precious degree) into the measure of his life, which made them pilgrims and strangers in this world, and steered their spirits towards another country.

Quest. What were the commands common to these?

Ans. They were seen by them in the streamings forth of that dispensation of life among them; a taste whereof the quickened spirit may have, in reading the words concerning them up and down the Scriptures.

Quest. What further dispensation of life hath there been?

Ans. That of the law to the Jews.

Quest. Was that a ministration of life? Was it not rather a ministration of death and condemnation?

Ans. It proved so in its effect, through the weakness of their state; but its natural tendency and proper effect, in case of obedience thereto, was life. And also in the midst of its administering death and condemnation, it pointed to him who was the justification and the life; insomuch as the law was kind to them in slaying them, and serviceable to the life of such souls as kindly received the stroke thereof, and fled to the hope set before them.

Quest. What were the common laws amongst these?

Ans. They are to be read in the writings of Moses and the prophets, wherein God's law and testimonies were abundantly given forth to that people.

Quest. Have there been yet any further dispensations of life?

Ans. Yes; that of the gospel, before the apostasy and falling away from the living truth and power of the Spirit, into man's wisdom, inventions, and imitations.

Quest. What were the laws common to these?

Ans. They may be read in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, where the record of this ministration is to be found.

Quest. What hath the ministration of life been since the apostles' days?

Ans. Very low, very weak, very dark, very hidden, ex-

ceedingly retired; yet true children have been begotten, and food hath been handed to them from the Father, and they have been nourished up in the faith, and have kept the commandments of their day, and died in the faith: and those who have thus been led and preserved, their souls are at rest, and in the peace of God. But these have not been in any particular, distinct gathering, and clear separation out of the world; but scattered up and down in several mistaken forms, and loaded with the inventions of the earthly wisdom, and with the bondage and weight of corruption, not knowing that clearness of spirit, and victory over sin, by the presence of the life, which was felt and enjoyed by the Christians before the apostasy.

Quest. Had these any common commandments?

Ans. Not so distinctly as the former; for they lying in a heap of confusion in a wilderness, or chaos, scattered in the mists and fogs of antichristian darkness one from another, had not such common beams of light, or clear streams of life running among them, as those that had a more distinct gathering. Yet some testimony for God, and against the corruption of the times, according to what was in their day and age to be testified for and against, did run among every sort (of such as were true-hearted) in some kind or other. And for this they were hated and persecuted by men, (even by such as were formal, and of another spirit) and also dearly tendered and beloved of the Lord.

Quest. Hath there been any further dispensation of life since the apostasy?

Ans. There is another begun, whose glory is to exceed the former, after the darkness (which overspread and clouded the beauty of the former) is expelled by the growing brightness of this appearance.

Quest. how may it appear that there is another?

Ans. There is no knowing this dispensation but by being gathered into the light of it. Wisdom hath been alone justified of her children in former ages, and she can be justified by none else, in her appearance in this age.

Quest. What is the difference of this from the former?

Ans. It is more inward, more retired, more closely depending upon the principle of life in the spirit, than the former.

Quest. Is it then the same in substance?

Ans. Yea, the very same. The very same truth of Christ Jesus, the very same building of God in the Spirit, the very same church is to be again brought forth; but in greater glory, that being now to be left out whereby the enemy then entered; and also degrees of beauty, strength and perfection being to be added.

Quest. But surely a greater glory than that in the apostles' days is not to be expected; nay, it is not the belief of many that ever that shall be restored.

Ans. This ariseth from the unbelief, and want of the sight of the thing by the right eye in the true light. For the travel of the eternal Spirit in its dispensation is towards perfection; and after the darkness of antichrist, the brightness of the light of life is to shine more clear than ever, as is abundantly testified in the Scriptures (especially in the book of the Revelations), and also seen by many in the clear openings of the same eternal Spirit.

Quest. Are there any common commands given forth in this dispensation?

Ans. Yes, unto all who are gathered in the Spirit of it. They all feel the same common commands unto several things, according to the nature and drift of this dispensation.

Quest. What are they?

Ans. They are many, and concern many things; to wit, their meetings to worship and wait on the Lord, who hath visited and gathered them; together with their way of worshipping, as also their converse and conversation amongst men, &c., which are not easily specified: neither indeed are they fit to be held forth to man's disputing wisdom; but to be waited for in the Spirit, where the light of them is evident, and the strength to perform them received and held.

Quest. But how may men know that these are true com-

mands of the Lord, and not imaginations or opinions of their own?

Ans. When the principle of life is known, and that which God hath begotten felt in the heart, the distinction between what God opens and requires there, and what springs up in man's wisdom, reason, and imagination, is very manifest.

Quest. Are there particular commands to particular persons besides these?

Ans. As every heart hath its own particular state, which is only fully known to the Spirit of the Lord, who is the leader of the soul out of its darkness and captivity, and the exerciser of it in what he judgeth proper to its present state; so the Lord giveth out particular commands as he pleaseth, either to do or forbear such a thing, as he judgeth it necessary for the soul.

Quest. How may these be known?

Ans. By coming into acquaintance with the Lord, and the movings and voice of his Spirit. First, the quickenings of the Spirit of the Lord are to be received into the heart; then the eye fixed, in that which is quickened, on him that quickened it, and all the inward senses waiting upon him, and exercised towards him. Thus the sheep come to know the voice of the Shepherd, and to follow his leadings into the pastures of life, and out of the paths and feedings of death, and are drawn on by him towards any thing, or stopped by him from any thing, at his pleasure.

Oh that the sons of men knew their God, and were gathered into any living dispensation by him, wherein they might have the true sense and seeking of him! Oh that men's souls were awakened to feel the want of the breath of life from whence they came! Oh that the seed of Israel were redeemed by their God, that their glory and beauty in his pure life might awaken the nations! O God, hasten thy work in the world! bring the glory and wisdom of man into contempt, and bring forth thine own glory and wisdom in its pure brightness.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

CONCERNING THE SEED OF ISRAEL, AND THE TRUE CHURCH.

Quest. WHO are the seed of Israel?

Ans. they who are begotten of the Spirit and nature of the eternal Father and fountain of life, out of the spirit and nature of this world.

Quest. Are there such a seed in the earth?

Ans. Yea, and have always been, who have still been the blessing of this world, though constantly hated and persecuted by it.

Quest. Why are they hated by the world?

Ans. Because they are not of the world, but faithful witnesses against it, testifying unto it, that its ways are evil, and its end misery.

Quest. Why do they thus testify?

Ans. It is their nature, and God calleth them thereunto. He hath set up his light in their hearts, to shine forth in the world, and scatter the darkness.

Quest. How do they scatter the darkness? Doth not the darkness rather scatter them?

Ans. The darkness doth indeed often prevail against them outwardly, hunting and scattering them up and down upon the face of the earth; but they still prevail inwardly, in the testimony of men's consciences, over the darkness; who, at one time or other, are generally made to acknowledge in the secrets of their hearts that they are of God.

Quest. Why doth the Lord suffer it to be thus, that that which is precious, and of him, should be trodden under foot by that which is not of him?

Ans. The Lord hath his season for the discovery of all

things. He hath given the kingdom of darkness its time and power to reign over the just, and to keep the holy seed in bondage and captivity; and he hath also appointed his suffering seed its season of suffering in all ages and generations. And by these, and through these, the nature of each is discovered, their ends, and their suitableness to their ends.

Quest. But shall this holy seed always suffer in this world?

Ans. Nay, not so; for the Lord hath a day to raise the just into dominion over the unjust, even here in this world.

Quest. When shall this be?

Ans. When the malice and persecution of the enemies of the pure seed are filled up, and the measure of its sufferings finished.

Quest. Where are this seed?

Ans. They are (as yet, for the generality) scattered up and down under the face of the whole heaven. Not to be found in a visible body gathered together; but scattered up and down, here a few, and there a few; here one, and there another.

Quest. Were they then once in a body?

Ans. Yea, they were once embodied: for after God had cast off the natural seed, the Jews, he gathered the spiritual seed, into a body, setting them as a city on a hill, and making them the light of the world.

Quest. How came they afterwards to be scattered?

Ans. The dragon hath done this, God suffering him many ways to assault this building, and so far at length to prevail over it, as even to scatter his church out of her built-state, into a wilderness-state, where no eye can discern her any more, but that which is of God. (Wait to read Rev. xii. in the light of that Spirit which wrote it.)

Quest. Why did God suffer the dragon to prevail over so precious and glorious a building?

Ans. Because there was somewhat of the power of darkness necessary to be made manifest, which could not be otherwise so made manifest as by this its prevailing; and al-

so that he might show the necessity of, and make way for the bringing forth of that, over which the power of darkness cannot prevail.

Quest. Is there then such a thing to be brought forth?

Ans. Yea, there is a church, there is a spiritual building, against which the gates of hell can never prevail; which is so united to the rock, that the powers of darkness can by no means come between the rock and it.

Quest. Are this church and the church in the apostles' days different, or the same?

Ans. This church hath been in all ages; but a more full and perfect bringing forth in the apostles' days than in any age before: yet not such a bringing forth outwardly, as might not be driven back. And therefore did the Lord suffer it to be assaulted and prevailed over, in that wherein it was weak through the outwardness of it, that (after many days) he might manifest his strength in bringing it forth more perfectly.

Quest. Where hath this church been these many ages, since the dragon's sore assault and overcoming it, as to its outwardness?

Ans. In the wilderness. Rev. xii.

Quest. What wilderness? Any outward, visible wilderness?

Ans. It is a parable, representing the scattered state of the seed after God's presence was withdrawn from the visible building, and it laid waste as to its life, and the appearances of his Spirit, and the dragon got into, and seated in, the form, 2 Thess. ii. 4. then the seed and appearances of God were to be found elsewhere, and not in those buildings.

Quest. How were those churches or buildings in the apostles' days laid waste?

Ans. The presence of the life and power makes the form living; and no longer is it or can it be so, than the life and power remain with it. Now they not abiding in the life and in the power (the apostasy coming, spoken of, 2 Thess. ii. 3.), the life and the power also withdrew from them, and left them the dead form, into which the prince of death im-

mediately enters; and so that which was a church unto God while the life abode there, and they in the life, becomes a synagogue of Satan, he entering into the dead form, and being worshipped there in the dead form. So that it is not any outward gathering or profession that makes a church under the New Testament, but only the life and power. That gathering which is in the life and power is a true church; that which is not, is a synagogue of Satan, let them profess what they will. For the living God dwells in living temples only, and the prince of death dwells in all the territories of death.

Quest. According to this rule there are, or have been, few true churches of God in the world since the days of the apostles.

Ans. The true church hath been in a wilderness-state since the days of the apostles. A scattered seed have her children been, and she a widow forsaken; God providing a place for the inward part of his building, and giving up the outward part to the formal spirit, to the possession of the powers of darkness. Read Rev. xi. 1, 2. The Lord, by the withdrawing of his Spirit, took down his own building, gave up the outward court to the Gentiles, removed the inward temple, altar, and worshippers into the wilderness. And since that time, men have built many buildings, in the imitation of that which God built (every sort according to their skill, and reasonings of their wisdom about the thing); but they are not the same building. But the true building, the true church, is reproached by all these builders, and not known to be the thing, because hid from their eye.

Quest. When shall this true church appear again?

Ans. When God, who gave her the wings of an eagle to fly into the wilderness, bringeth her the same wings again to fly out. Then shall she come forth clothed with the sun again, with the moon under her feet, and with her crown of stars.

Quest. How may it appear that those present buildings which are to be found in the world are not the true churches?

Ans. Because they are built by men, and their strength stands not in the demonstration and power of the Spirit, but in the wisdom and power of man; take away that, they soon crumble and moulder of themselves. Besides, they are not clothed with the sun, have not the moon under their feet, nor know not the travail to bring forth the man-child, which the true church knows even in the wilderness.

Quest. Why do men keep such buildings, and not rather mourn after the true building of God, which is built and preserved in the light and power of his Spirit?

Ans. Antichrist's time is not yet fully ended, nor the mists wherewith he blinds men's eyes scattered, nor the cup of his fornications (which makes every one drunk and besotted as to the sight and knowledge of the true church, which drinks of it) taken from men's lips.

Quest. How may I know the true church?

Ans. By being born of God's Spirit, and looking with that eye which he gives to those whom he begets in that light of life which shineth from his presence: here his holy church and true spouse is discerned and distinguished from all false resemblances, and vain pretenders.

Quest. Are there then many resemblances of the true church, and pretenders to be such, which are not so indeed?

Ans. Yes; there is the mother of harlots, Rev. xvii. 5. and her many daughters; all which pretend to be the true churches of Christ, but want that life in themselves, and that union in spirit with him, which alone can make such.

Quest. What makes a true church?

Ans. That alone which makes a spiritual body, and which unites that body to the head. There must be a true nature, and the union of that nature to the head, or there cannot be a marriage in spirit to the Lamb. Now the true church is Christ's spouse, *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*, as truly of the seed of Abraham after the spirit, as the Jews were after the flesh. And *as he that saith he is a Jew*, but wanteth the true circumcision of the heart and spirit, doth but lie, and is not indeed so; *so they that say they are a church*, but want the nature of the *church*, they also lie, and

are not a true gathering of Christians out of the world, but a synagogue of Satan, still abiding and worshipping in the spirit of the world. Rev. ii. 9, and chap. iii. 9.

Quest. May not the true church be known by outward, visible marks, as most persons describe and seek to find and distinguish her by?

Ans. No; not possibly in her wilderness state, nor hardly in her built-state.

Quest. Why not possibly in her wilderness-state?

Ans. Because there she is stripped of them, and the harlots, or false churches, are clothed with them. Mark the thing:— In the very apostles' days, the false ministers and false Christians got into the form, and denied the power. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Now after a season God leaves the form to them, Rev. xi. 2. gathering his church out of that appearance into the hidden power. Here is the wilderness into which the church fled; the life, the power, which before appeared in the form, being withdrawn and separated from the form, and the living seed gathered into it, and worshipping in it. And who can now find the church, or learn the worship? Here the eye of the seed is tried, and the wisdom of the spirit of the true disciple. And here, ever since, all the world have been jangling about the form, while the true witnesses have been mourning after the power, testifying concerning the power, and enjoying what was to be given forth of it, in the present way of its dispensation in the wilderness.

Quest. Why hardly in her built-state?

Ans. Because even then such variety of resemblances and likenesses of the true church may be built, as cannot be distinguished from the true itself by any outward marks. There were in the apostles' days false apostles, false ministers, and false churches; which, though they appeared as the apostles of Christ, as ministers of righteousness, as the churches of Christ, yet they were not so, but false prophets, deceitful workers, and synagogues of Satan. Now they which intend to deceive, appear most exactly in the form, and with the outward marks, if need require; and that

which is true and substantial, is not so regardful of the outward form, but minds the inward life, truth and substance. He therefore that judges by the form and outward marks, cannot but judge that to be the true spouse which appears most in the form, and with the outward marks, and so is very liable to be deceived and err, by judging some of the false churches to be true, and the true to be false.

Quest. What am I to do when I know the true church?

Ans. To wait in that which gives to be a member of it, and gives true union with it, whether it be in the wilderness-state, or in its built-state. For the same Spirit, which begets the child in the true life, will also lead to the church; and in that wisdom which is from above the true church will never be missed of; but in the earthly reasonings and guessings of man's wisdom, God's church (or New Testament building in the power of his Spirit) is easily missed. And he that misseth of this, and is out of the pale of it, is it possible he should meet with the true salvation? "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" and he that hath but so much as the heart of a man, let him consider, for the thing is of great weight, and of deep concernment to the soul.

Well: have but patience awhile, and the true church (which God's Spirit builds) shall be known, and all the false churches of men's building shall be known also. And that which God hath built shall have the power from God, and the praise among men; and all the Babylonish buildings of man's confused spirit, and inconsistent wisdom, shall vanish away like smoke, and become a stink in all nostrils. For strong is the Lord God of heaven and earth, who is confounding Babylon in all her gaudy attire, and glorious appearances, and raising up his Zion out of the dust. *Amen, hallelujah!*

SOME

FURTHER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

CONCERNING THE SEED OF ISRAEL.

Quest. OUT of what womb doth the seed of Israel spring?

Ans. Out of the nature of eternal life, out of the bosom of eternal love, out of the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of all that are born of the Spirit.

Quest. By what covenant are the children of Israel brought up?

Ans. By the covenant of faith in the love of the Father, which gives life and strength to obey.

Quest. Is there obedience required in the new covenant?

Ans. Yes; the obedience of faith, the subjection of the nature and heart of the child, to the nature and will of the Father; which is as fully natural in the substance as it can be represented in any figure or shadow.

Quest. What if there be disobedience?

Ans. The seed itself cannot disobey; but the vessel in which it is sown, and to which it is united, may prove weak, frail, brittle, yea, sometimes stubborn; the weight and chastisement whereof the seed also bears, and in patient suffering helps and cleanses the vessel through the virtue of the blood of Jesus, which is felt in the seed which comes from Jesus. And here is the blood of sprinkling known in the soul, which cleanses the conscience from dead works, and washes away the iniquity thereof.

Quest. Can any fall from this covenant?

Ans. The covenant is with the seed for ever, and with the seed's seed also is it firm; but the streamings forth of the light of the covenant do not always beget a seed, but only sometimes set man's nature on work, drawing forth the faith, love, and obedience thereof. Now this will not

hold. All flesh is grass, and at one time or other will fade and wither; but there must be a being begotten of the Word, to live and abide for ever.

Quest. How is this begetting?

Ans. In the weakening of man's strength day by day, and raising up the seed, which seed gives life and strength to him that is weakened in the manhood.

Quest. How is this done?

Ans. First by drawing forth what is in the man, and then by trying its strength, distressing the man with exercises beyond him. Thus the working man is brought down by the requirings of the law, they being too hard for him, and the believing seed is raised up; who, in the virtue of the living faith (whereof he receiveth supplies from the breath of eternal life), fulfils the righteousness of the law in the man, and also communicates a righteousness of a higher nature unto him.

Quest. Why doth God take this course with man?

Ans. It is proper and natural. How can a higher principle be raised in man, but by the death of the former? And how can the former die, but by such exercises, trials, and distresses as are proper to wear out the strength of its nature, and bring it into the nothingness, where that which is, springs up; when it hath brought down that which appeared, but was not?

Oh! who can understand God's works in the world? Who can read the mystery of life and death in man? Oh, what a worm is man before his God! What is his nature? In what state is he able to walk with his God? God can keep covenant with man in any kind of dispensation; but man still fails: his heart deceives him, and he is not able to attain unto, or maintain any considerable proportion of, happiness to his soul by his covenant.

Quest. What is man's covenant?

Ans. That which his nature desires of God to make him happy. That light, that counsel, that strength, that presence which his nature thinks sufficient, will not carry him through. Nay, let God show grace and mercy, and add

helps unto him in the riches of his love, yet this will not do. How doth man fall in every dispensation, where there is any stress laid on this covenant, though God is able to be a father and a husband therein!

Quest. What is God's covenant?

Ans. That which his nature sees needful to make man happy in him, and to keep man in the enjoyment of his happiness. This, so far as it is dispensed, carries through; and when it is dispensed perfectly, will bring forth the perfect redemption and happiness of the creature.

Now then that soul that would travel towards life eternal;

First, Wait to feel a principle of life awakened, raised up, sown in thy earth by the living God.

Secondly, Wait to receive all the light of life in every kind, that the Father of lights shall please to cause to shine in thy heart, from this principle.

Thirdly, Be content to be tried and distressed, and have thy strength broken day by day, and thy wisdom confounded, that thou mayest sink into, and pass away in, the weakness and foolishness which the Lord will bring upon thee, before the wisdom and strength of his life appear in thee.

Fourthly, Keep thine eye and heart on the grace that first visited thee, that there thy footing may be, and thy hopes fastened. Oh! receive the light still from the hand of grace, and look up thither for strength to obey the light; that the earthly man get not a life in the obedience, and thou forget the grace, and thy need of Christ, the anointed of the Lord; and so thou live on what thou hast received from God, and not Christ live in thee; and look upon thy working obedience as the righteousness, and feel not the righteousness of Christ, which is the free justification of his life and power, washing away the guilt of the ungodly!

Ah! narrow is the path that leads unto life; none can enter in at it, but the Seed, and the Seed's seed; even that which dies in the creatureship, in the principle which Adam received from the Lord, and springs up in the nature and being of this seed.

Read this, O travellers towards the holy land, with the eye which God creates! that ye may run certainly in his begettings, in his creatings, in his leadings towards his land of eternal rest; even in the certain law and power of his endless life, and not in the uncertain reasonings, imaginings, and guessing at things by the human understanding.

TO

ALL SUCH AS COMPLAIN THAT THEY WANT

POWER:

NOT APPLYING THEMSELVES TO YIELD SUBJECTION TO WHAT OF GOD IS MADE MANIFEST IN THEM, UPON A PRETENCE OF WAITING FOR POWER SO TO DO.

THE Lord God of eternal power, who made man in his own image, he stretcheth forth his arm to save and redeem his lost creature; it is his power alone that effecteth the work of redemption; he quickeneth man, who is dead in trespasses and sins; he keepeth alive, and leadeth on the quickened soul in the path of life; he conquereth, scattereth, and subdueth all the enemies round about the soul, even all the lusts, corruptions, and temptations, which lead unto, and entangle in, perdition.

Yet the Lord God requireth somewhat of the man whom he saveth, without which being found in man, and returned to him from man, he saveth him not.

Quest. What doth he require of man?

Ans. He requireth of man *repentance, faith, and obedience.* That he should turn at his call, from the darkness to the light; that he should trust in, and cleave to, the light, but believe the spirit of darkness no more; and lastly, That he should obey the light, follow the light, walk in the footsteps of the living towards the land of light; work the works of God in the light.

Quest. How can man do this?

Ans. Of himself he cannot: but being touched, being quickened by the eternal power, being turned by a secret

virtue and stirring of the life in his heart, then he can turn towards that which turneth him. Being drawn by the life, by the power; he can follow after the life, and after the power. Finding the sweetness of the living vine, and his soul made alive by the sap of the vine, his heart can now cleave to, and abide in, the vine, and bring forth the fruit of the living faith and obedience to the husbandman, who daily dresseth the heart, that waiteth in the living principle for further life from the fountain, that it may bring forth the fruits of life more and more.

Now mark: Is it possible for any man to come to the eternal rest, that travels not in the path? Or is there any path, but the repentance, faith, and obedience of the living spirit; even of the child begotten by the eternal power, who is taught by the Father to abide and walk in the life and in the power?

God putteth forth his hand all the day long, to fetch home lost man. He hath given him a talent, a living talent, which is able to work man into life, and to bring forth the the fruits of life in man. Man overlooks the talent, joins not his heart to it, brings not forth the fruits of life to the giver, but cries he wants power; and *what is he? What can he do? Can he cleanse his own heart? Can he kill his corruptions? Can he quicken himself?* &c.

Now mark again. There are several dispensations of God to mankind; in all which, man (of himself) falls short of the life, of the power, of the glory, and comes under condemnation. God lays the blame on man, for not hearkening, for not believing, for not walking with him. Man lays the blame on God, and says he wants power. Look on him who is not obedient to the light, which he cannot but confess to shine in his heart, and often to reprove him: ask him why he doth not obey it? Is not this his plea; *that he wants power?* Now let men consider, will this stand before the throne of God? This is the condemnation, that men do not believe the light of life, do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, do not trust and follow the light which would lead them to life, but trust and follow the

darkness, which leads into death, and into everlasting condemnation. Their plea is, *they want power so to do.* Is this true?

I confess the power doth not so flow forth to man, as man expects it; but the power of life works man out of death in a mystery, and begins in him as weakness. There is all the strength, all the power of the enemy, against the work of God in the heart. There is but a little thing (like a grain of mustard-seed), a weak thing, a foolish thing, even that which is not (to man's eye), to overcome all this; and yet in this is the power. And here is the great deceit of man; he looks for a great, manifest power in or upon him to begin with, and doth not see how the power is in the little weak stirrings of life in the heart, in the rising up of somewhat against the mighty strength of corruption in him; which he returning towards, cleaving to, and waiting upon the Lord in, the strength of the Lord will be made manifest in its season, and he will be drawn nearer and nearer to the Lord, and his enemies be overcome and fall he knows not how. But he that waits for such a mighty appearance of power at first, looking so to begin, and after that manner to be preserved and carried on, can never in this capacity so much as walk in the path eternal: nor is not in the way of receiving the power, which springs up as weakness, and leads on and overcomes enemies in a mysterious way of working, and not in such a manifest and direct way of conquest, as man's wisdom expects.

The seed of the kingdom is sown man knows not how, even by a sound of the eternal Spirit, which he is not a fit judge of; and it grows up he knows not how; and the power appears and works in it, in a way that he is not aware of. He looks for the kingdom, the power, and the life, in a way of his observation, answerable to the thoughts and expectations of his heart. But thus it never comes; but in the way of its own eternal motion, it springs in the hearts of many, and they overlook the thing, and turn from it daily, not knowing its proper way of appearance, but expecting it some other way. And thus the enemy holds

them in the bands of death, and they are captives in the strange land, refusing the Prince of life, in his daily offers of life, because they look not for him thus, but after another way and manner. And till this eye of observation be put out in them, they can never clearly see the appearance of the Saviour to them, nor feel the efficacy of his saving of them from that, from which none but he can deliver.

Now for the sakes of such as are single-hearted, and yet withheld from the enjoyment of the life of God and of his pure power, through a way of wrong expecting it; I shall say a little concerning the operation of the power in quickening and leading on the quickened soul, as also concerning the way of its springing up in the heart, and the necessity of this way. I myself was long withheld from obedience to the light eternal, in its low appearance of discovering and convincing of sin, through this very deceit, believing that my condition required the manifest appearance of a very great power to help me; and so when sin overcame me, I did only mourn over it, crying after and waiting for power, but was kept from joining with, and cleaving to that, wherein the power springs up and manifests itself according to its own pleasure, quite contrary to the way of man's expectation.

The operations of the power are divers and gradual, according to the condition and necessity of the soul whom it visits, and reacheth forth its hand unto.

1. There is a discovery of the darkness, and of the erring of the heart from God. This is power; for this should never be in any heart, could all the powers of darkness there withstand it.

2. There is a rising of the heart against the evil, with a desire of deliverance from it, and of the springing up of the good in such power as might conquer it. This is a further appearance of power than the former, and a good beginning towards believing or joining with the redeeming arm, which all the powers of darkness (with all manner of subtlety) endeavor to divert the heart from.

3. There is an upright frame of spirit begotten, and a

truth of heart formed towards the Lord; from which desires, and cries, and groans after his life and presence, and for deliverance from the enemy, and from under the power of his deceit, spring more and more.

4. There is a fear begotten in the heart of being deceived by the enemy, of being drawn from the feeling of, and panting after, the life and power of God.

5. There is a hope and trust in the Lord's goodness and mercy, with a daily waiting for his appearance, for the manifestation of his Spirit and pure presence, and for the springings up of his fresh life and precious virtue.

6. There are overturnings of the enemy, battering down his strong-holds, breaking of many snares, beating back of many furious assaults, and causing the plant of life to grow up, and triumph over all the powers of darkness.

7. There are secret stayings and upholdings of the heart in the hour of darkness, when God sees necessary to let forth the power thereof upon the soul, and to eclipse his own power. When the enemy buffets, tempts, prevails, and gets ground upon the soul, is drawing it back under the veil, even into the pit, and nothing appears near to stop it, or rescue the soul from death, and from the power of the grave, but the sting thereof enters and deeply wounds the soul; yet even then the power is near, secretly upholding, preserving, and watching over the soul; and waiting for the proper season of deliverance. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand," said David, when his feet had almost slipped into the grievous snare of desperate unbelief, and murmuring against God's dealings with him and the rest of his people.

Many more operations of the power might be mentioned, even of its tabernacling and glorious appearing in some vessels in various ways, both delighting itself in the heart, and also filling the heart with delight and joy in the pure life: but these thing are better enjoyed and sweetly felt, in the silence of the fleshly part, than spoken of to the ear which is not fit to hear the sound thereof.

Secondly, *The way of the power's springing up in the heart:* which is,

1. In its turning from the darkness, in the faith, and in the pure obedience which flows from the faith. For as the soul turns from the power of darkness and death, towards the power of the eternal Spirit of light; so the power meets it, embraces it, appears to it, and manifests itself in it, proportionable to its present capacity and condition. And as the soul, being touched with the living virtue, gives itself up to believe, and to trust the power which draws; so the power manifests itself in the heart, according to the proportion of the faith which the eternal virtue hath begotten there. And as the soul in the faith gives itself up to obey, so the power appears and works the obedience. For we can do nothing of ourselves; but being called, being drawn, being required to do that which is far beyond our strength, and giving up thereto; the life springs, the power appears, which does the work. This the Philipians had experience of, to whom the apostle gave that exhortation; "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is the unbeliever hangs back, and cries where shall I have power? But the faith follows the moving and drawing of the Spirit, and the power never fails the faith. But that which cries, how shall I get out of Egypt? *Which way shall I ever be able to pass through this intricate wilderness? How shall I overcome those mighty enemies, which already have the possession of the land I should inherit, and are strongly fenced in it, and mighty in strength to keep their hold thereof?* This is not the right seed, this is not the true Israel, for whom the everlasting inheritance of the life and of the pure power is prepared.

2. Under the cross, under the yoke to the corrupt (yea, and to the very natural), the power springs. The false birth would have the power spring in a way pleasing to itself; at the time its wisdom sees necessary, and in the way its will would have it; but the power springs up according to its own wisdom, at its own time, and after its own way. When

the man would have it, then it flies from him; and when it is not expected, nor perhaps desired (at least in that way wherein it chooses to appear), then it springs up and puts forth itself. Most men, that have felt any thing of God, cannot but desire his life and power; but most fly the cross, wherein it hath chosen to appear; and so they can never meet with it, but are still complaining for the want of it. In the power is the case, the rest of the gospel. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me*, saith Christ, *and ye shall find the rest which flows from the power.* This made Paul rejoice in the cross of Christ, whereby the fleshly lusts were brought down in him; and the life and eternal power sprang in the seed of the kingdom: for under the cross the seed grows up and flourishes, and the flesh withers and dies. And as the power of flesh and death wastes, so the power of Spirit and life increases.

3. The power springs under the fear, and in the uprightness and love which God hath begotten. I put these together, for there is a close unity between them. The fear is the dwelling of the upright heart, and the love is within the fear. He that distrusts himself, feels his own nothingness, finds no power to do any thing God requireth, and yet also fears to stay behind the light of God's Spirit, in any thing it requires, and so finds a putting on forwards in the faith; in him the power delights to appear. He that would feel strength before-hand, and act in the sense of that strength, from him the power withdraws; but he that is weak, and hath no strength, but still as it freely drops into him from moment to moment, this is the vessel the power chooseth to manifest itself to, and to be continually appearing in. This is the new covenant, "I will put my fear in their hearts." And where the fear of the new covenant is found, so much life, power, and eternal virtue, as is necessary for the present state of that heart, cannot be far off. So in the *upright-hearted*, in the heart that is true to God, the power of deceit cannot dwell, but the power of truth delights to fill it, in a way suitable to the state of the spirit, and so as may be seen by the eye of the spirit, and

felt by the spiritual sense. And in the love is the constraining power, which constrains from the evil path, from the path of unbelief and disobedience, into the path of life.

Thirdly. *The necessity of this way of the springing up of the power*, and not in such a manifest way as man's heart desires, and as man's eye expects.

It is necessary in several respects. In respect of God, in reference to the creature, and in reference to the soul's enemies.

1. *In respect of God.* It is necessary that his power and life should spring up in the creature in its own way, according to the counsel of his own wisdom, suitable to his own nature, and not in the way which the creature chalks out, and expects it in. God must be like himself, and walk in his own path in every thing he does. He is a God that hideth himself in the mystery of his working, throughout the whole track of man's redemption; and man must be wrought out of himself, out of his own thoughts, expectations, gathered apprehensions concerning the kingdom and way to life, and led in a path he doth not know (nor ever can know any longer than he is in it); and in ways he hath not been acquainted with. The way of life is still new, every moment fresh and living; and the earthly part of those, who may have in some measure felt the power of regeneration, cannot know it, nor walk in it. Consider this, O ye that fence yourselves against the present appearance of the Spirit; and against the convictions, demonstrations, and drawings of its eternal light and power, by somewhat which ye have formerly felt and known.

2. *In reference to the creature*, the power of God must needs appear thus hiddenly, and in such a mysterious way.

1. That the creature might go through all those exercises of spirit, which are necessary to fit it for its inheritance in the holy land. There are straits, wants, trials, temptations, inward weaknesses, buffetings from the enemy, withdrawings of the life, &c., God seeth necessary to exercise the spirits of his with, that he might fit them for himself, and for a safe enjoyment of his life in fulness; which could not

be, if there were such a manifest power to begin with, and continually at hand, to perform all in and for the soul, as many men wait for, and think necessary to have.

2. That the fleshly part might be thoroughly worn out and destroyed. When the power appears and works mightily in the soul, there is somewhat apt to get up, to exalt himself by the power, and to abuse the power; and if the power were not withdrawn, and this tormented and famished in the absence of the power, and in the withdrawing of the sweet appearance of life, a wrong thing would be stealing into the inheritance, and the soul would never be thoroughly purified, nor come to a pure enjoyment of the power. Therefore doth the Lord appear in this mysterious way, *that the promise might be sure to the seed;* that the seed which is the right heir of the power, might come alone to inherit the power, and the false birth not touch the least enjoyment of it, but feel the bitter strokes of death and destruction from it. What had become of Paul, if he had had power to resist the buffetings of the enemy, as he desired? Would not his fleshly part have remained in the exaltation, and not have been brought down? 2. Cor. xii. 7.

3. *In reference to the enemy.* The enemy could never be wholly conquered, his strong holds in the heart broken down, and the redemption from under his hand perfected, were it not for this mysterious way of the appearing and working of the power, even out of the sight of man's eye, and contrary to his will and expectation. For had man such a power as he desires, still present with him; had he faith in his power, or obedience in his power, or could he take up the cross in his power, or have strength to fight against the enemy as he desires and expects, the enemy would still find entrance into him, and keep his hold of him. But God, who knoweth the state of the creature, with the strength and passages of the enemy into man, by working with his mighty power in man according to his own will, and in the way of his own wisdom (contrary to what man can desire or expect, but as he is taken into, and comprehended in, the eternal will), carries on his work

sweetly, and safely, and perfects the salvation of those who will not, who run not, who desire not to be any thing, but wait to feel and know his power, and to become subject to it, and lie under, even in the lowest way of its manifestation and appearance.

Obj. This may be true in the ordinary way of redemption of souls; but there are deep captivities (even the captivity of Babylon inwardly, spiritually) which surely will need a very great appearance of the power of God to deliver out of; and what can that soul do, but wait there under the captivity, until the mighty power arise?

Ans. It is true; the power must needs be very great, and the appearance of it wonderful, which delivers out of such captivity; but yet the beginnings of it may be small, and out of the sight of that eye which looks and waits for so great an appearance. Hast thou not light enough already to begin thy travel out of Babylon? Hast thou begun thy travel? Dost thou walk in the light which shineth upon thee in that dark land, to gather and lead thee out of it? Or wilt thou not begin to come out, till the very glory and brightness of Zion shine upon thee? If there be but light and power enough to lead thee one step out of the land of darkness and confusion of spirit, towards obedience to the lowest or meanest truth, that is sufficient for thee at present; and as thou art found faithful here, more will spring in thee; but if thou stop here (or at any time after thou hast begun, and made some progress, because of any thing which falleth out contrary to thy expectation), then that which should lead thee on, and strengthen thee, stops also; and thou meetest not with that which is found and enjoyed by others in the way, because thou passest not on in it, but balkest thy proper path, judging somewhat more necessary towards thy beginning or progress, than the Lord judgeth, or yet seeth fit to impart to thee.

Thus the enemy betrays thee, and holds thee in his chains, which might be loosed and cast off by little and little, didst thou singly give up to the little appearance of that light and power which is able to unbind them, and

not expect more at first (or afterwards) than the Lord hath allotted for thy present condition. And let me tell thee this from certain knowledge and experience; that thou, who hast been high, and hast tasted much of God, but hast abused it, and fed the wrong part with it, both in thyself and others; thou must be brought lower than the rest, and for a long season be kept lower; that the pure seed (which hath deeply been buried in thee) may overgrow and sink all thy knowledge, experiences, and observations, concerning the eternal life, and its way of appearance, which formerly thou hadst some true taste of, but now holdest out of the life.

Thou must come down, thou must become nothing by degrees, thou must lie at the foot of the reprovings of that light, which thou thinkest thou hast gone far beyond, and be glad of a little help now and then in the lowliness and humility of thy heart, which must not choose what appearance and manifestation it will have from God, before it will begin to follow him, but be glad of ever so little, that the infinite wisdom sees good to give forth by the hand of his mercy.

Whoever have been high, and are still waiting and expecting in the heights of their own wisdom and observations concerning the kingdom, let them take heed *of despising the day of small things*, and know that their proper beginning (yea the very path of eternal life itself) lies in the lowness, in the humility, even in that nothingness which bows before the least light of the day, and with gladness of heart enters into, and walks in it. For this I certainly know; the wise, the observing eye, the vast comprehending heart, which waits for such an extraordinary power, judging it cannot begin following the light, which daily appears to check and reprove, without some great manifest appearance of power; this cannot see the low little path of life, which is proper for it to walk in, and to the end whereof it must travel, if ever it come to sit down in the kingdom, or to inherit the power of the endless life. Precious is the dispensation of this age, great is the power and glory which is

arising; but the wise and knowing of this age are shut out of it, as they have been out of the life and truth of the dispensations of God in all ages. Happy is he who is not above that, wherewith God visiteth his soul to redeem it.

POSTSCRIPT.

THAT persons, who have not travelled into the land of life, want power, that is out of doubt. The state of Israel in its travels is a state of weaknesses and wants. How can they in the wilderness but want that which is to be possessed in the Holy Land? But dost thou want power to begin the travel with? Dost thou want what proportion of power the Lord sees necessary for thee in thy present estate? Is there nothing at all discovered to thee which is contrary to God, either in thy heart or in thy conversation or in thy worship, which thou dost not so much as strive to give up to the Lord in, waiting upon him for his power and strength to appear in helping thee? The light appears to discover and lead out of the darkness: now in giving up to the light, and not doubting but that which calls and draws out will give strength, and enable to come out, the power is met with unawares. But that which stands gazing and looking out after a power, which it expects to meet with, before it will so much as begin to follow the light; that cannot but abide in the captivity, and miss of that power which redeemeth from it. Therefore,

1. Wait to feel the light of life discovering and drawing from the evil: and let it choose what it shall please first to discover and draw from. And though it be little, and very inconsiderable in thine eyes, yet dispute not, but where the light first begins to lead, do thou there begin to follow.

Then in this waiting and subjecting to the manifestations of the light, out of the self-will, self-wisdom, self-knowledge, self-judgment, in the lowliness and abasedness of the mind

and spirit before the Lord, the begettings of life in the light are felt, and the renewing into his pure image.

Afterwards that which is begotten (and begun to be renewed in the divine image) is by degrees taught more distinctly to know, discern, and walk in the path of life.

And after this, to that which is thus begotten, and taught the living faith and obedience (which is wrought by the mighty power of God, though running in a low, secret, hidden way, from the eye of the creature), the great power is revealed, and he grows strong in the power *for God*, and against the enemies of his soul; and by this strength and feeling of God's presence, they *fall daily and continually before him*, and then his victory over them goes on with joy.

But he that stops at first may grow wise and conceited, concerning the things of the kingdom after the flesh, and may hope for great things at last; but by the deceit of the subtlety, is kept out of the living path, wherein they are to be waited for, reaped, and enjoyed.

Now for the encouragement of such as are willing to travel on in the weakness, yielding up their members to the present manifestation of the light, and waiting for the further appearance of the power; it is on my heart to add a letter of a dear friend and brother of mine in the truth, who hath been a deep traveller and fellow-sufferer with me formerly, before this help came forth from the throne of God, since the day-spring from on high hath vouchsafed to visit us, and to guide our feet in the way of everlasting peace.

The LETTER is as followeth:—

Dear Friend,

"My dear and tender love salutes thee, in that love from whence I had my being, and from whence sprang all my Father's children, who are born from above, heirs of an everlasting inheritance. Oh! how sweet and pleasant are the pastures which my Father causeth all his sheep to feed in; there is variety of plenty in his pastures, milk for babes, and strong meat for them of riper age, and wine to refresh those that are ready to faint, even the wine of the

kingdom, that makes glad the heart, when it is ready to faint by reason of the infirmities. Sure I am, none can be so weary, but he takes care of them; nor none so nigh fainting, but he puts his arm under their heads; nor none can be so beset with enemies on every side, but he will arise and scatter; nor none so heavy laden and big with young, but he takes notice of them, and gently leads them, and will not leave them behind unto the merciless wolf, because they are his own, and his life is the price of their redemption, and his blood of their ransom; and if they be so young that they cannot go, he carries them in his arms; and when they can feel nothing stirring after him, his bowels yearn after them; so tender is this good Shepherd after his flock. I can tell, for I was as one that went astray, and wandered upon the barren mountains; and when I had wearied myself with wandering, I went into the wilderness, and there I was torn as with briars, and pricked as with thorns, sometimes thinking this was the way, and sometimes concluding that was the way, and by and by concluding all was out of the way; and then bitter mourning came upon me, and weeping for want of the interpreter; for when I sought to know what was the matter, and where I was, it was too hard for me. Then I thought I would venture on some way where it was most likely to find a lost God, and I would pray with them that prayed, and fast with them that fasted, and mourn with them that mourned, if by any means I might come to rest, but found it not, until I came to see the candle lighted in my own house, and my heart swept from those thoughts, and imaginations, and willings, and runnings, and to die unto them all, not heeding of them, but watching against them, lest I should let my mind go a whoring after them. And here I dwelt for a time as in a desolate land uninhabited, where I sat alone as a sparrow upon the house-top, and was hunted up and down like a partridge upon the mountains, and could rest nowhere, but some lust or thought or other followed me at the heels, and disquieted me night and day, until I came to know him in whom was rest, and no occasion of stumbling, in whom the

devil hath no part; and he became unto me as a hiding-place from the storms, and from the tempests. Then came my eyes to see my Saviour, and my sorrow fled away, and he became made unto me all in all, my wisdom, my righteousness, and my sanctification; in whom I was and am complete, to the praise of the riches of his grace and goodness that endures for ever. Therefore be not discouraged, O thou tossed as with tempests! nor dismayed in thyself; because thou seest such mighty hosts of enemies rising up against thee, and besetting thee on every side: for none was so beset and tried, and tempted, as the true Seed was, who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But be thou still in thy mind, and let the billows pass over, and wave upon wave; and fret not thyself because of them, neither be cast down, as if it should never be otherwise with thee: sorrow comes at night, but joy in the morning; and the days of thy mourning shall be over, and the accuser will God cast out for ever. For therefore was I afflicted, and not comforted, and tempted, and tried, for this end, that I might know how to speak a word in due season, unto those who are tempted and afflicted as I once was; as it was said unto me in that day when sorrow lay heavy upon me. Therefore be not disconsolated, neither give heed unto the reasonings and disputings of thy own heart; nor the fears that rise therefrom, but be strong in the faith, believing in the light which lets thee see them, and his grace thou wilt know to be sufficient for thee, and his strength to be made perfect in thy weakness. And so thou rather wilt glory in thy infirmities, that his power may rest upon thee, than in thy earnest desires to be rid of them; for by these things thou wilt come to live in the life of God, and joy in God, and glory in tribulation, when thou hast learned in all conditions to be contented; and through trials, and deep exercises, is the way to learn this lesson. These things in dear love to thee I have written, being somewhat sensible of thy condition, and the many snares thou art daily liable unto; therefore watch that thou fall not into temptation, and

my God and Father keep thee in the arms of eternal love, over all, unto the end, unto his praise; Amen.

John Crooke."

SOME QUERIES

TO THE

Strict and zealous professors of this age (such as stick in the letter, but are strangers to the life and power), to provoke them to jealousy, Lest the heathen and open sinners outstrip them, and enter into the kingdom of the pure, everlasting light before them.

Query I. Whether God, since the fall of man from the purity and glory of his state, doth truly and really desire the salvation of all mankind; and so would have them come to the knowledge of the truth, that they might believe it, receive it, walk in it, and so obtain salvation thereby? Or whether he would have only some few of them to receive it, and be saved, and the rest to perish?

Query II. If God would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, which is the means of salvation, then whether there is sufficient done by God to convey the knowledge of his truth to all men, so as they may come to the knowledge thereof and be saved? Or whether there is such a defect on God's part, that some men never had sufficient means to come so far to the knowledge of his truth, as that they might come into that way of salvation thereby?

Query III. Though God doth please to add superabundant means, in the riches of his grace, towards some, more than others; as to the Jews under the law, and to the disciples of Christ under the gospel; yet whether there is not so

much light of the Spirit communicated to all, as, if followed, might lead them out of the darkness, and from under the power of it?

Query IV. Whether God be not so near to every man, as that possibly he may seek after him, and find him? And if he do find him, and his heart cleave to him, whether it can possbily be but virtue should issue forth from God, to draw him out of the alienation from him, and out of the power of sin, death, and hell?

Query V. Whether, if a man feel God, and cleave to God, and begin to discern the streamings of light from him, and follow the Lord therein, whether God will not accept this man therein? And whether his divine light let into him (being believed in and obeyed) will not purify him from darkness, unbelief, and disobedience? And whether God will not impute to this man what Christ performed on man's behalf in the flesh, he being in unity with, and in subjection to, the light and power whereby it was wrought (wherein is the fellowship with the blood, and wherein alone it washeth from the sin), though as to the outward knowledge of what was outwardly done, the man may possibly be ignorant? And seeing it is not absolutely necessary towards the involving in the guilt of Adam's sin, the outward knowing what Adam did; but the proceeding from, and being found in, the same spirit and nature, doth sufficiently convey it; so whether being gathered into, and found in, Christ's spirit, even in faith, obedience, and subjection to the light thereof in the heart, whether this is not also sufficient to convey the righteousness of Christ? And whether God will fail to impute it to that man?

Query VI. Whether true religion, spiritual worship, and the salvation of the soul, do not depend upon the Spirit of the Lord, who is near to every heart with his eternal light, which he can easily convey to any heart, whose ear is opened to hearken to his breathings and drawings? So that it is easy to the Lord to save any of the sons of men, even in the darkest and remotest corners of the earth; and

he can cast off those who seem highest in zeal, and most flourishing under any outward means of salvation.

Oh, wonderfully infinite is the Lord! Who shall bound his Spirit? Happy is he that feareth before him, and in his fear learneth to depart from iniquity, and walk in the good path that his Spirit teacheth. He is near to God, and shall taste of the good things, and shall not be rejected for want of outward knowledge; but whatever was done for lost man, he that is found in the light of life (and in the obedience to the Spirit of life) shall reap the benefit of; but he that boasts in his knowledge of these things, and of his faith in Christ Jesus, yet not being found in the true, living, eternal light of the Spirit (but an enemy to it, and ignorant of it), the Lord will rend his confidence from him, in a day that he is not aware of.

Glorious was the dispensation of the law, and great was the advantage to the Jews thereby above the Gentiles; yet they missing the Spirit and life of it (and growing wise in their own apprehensions, and interpretations about it), fell beneath the Gentiles, becoming greater strangers to the power and wisdom of God, and harder to be reached and brought in under the subjection of the gospel. More glorious was the dispensation of the gospel to the Christians, and much greater was their advantage than that of the Jews; but an apostasy coming, and they losing the true power and Spirit, and growing wise by a literal knowledge of some of the things of God in the earthly part, and forming interpretations of scriptures, and entering into practices in that wisdom, they are now become at as great a distance from this powerful visitation of God by his Spirit (which raiseth the seed, and springeth up freshly in the hearts of those, whom the Lord our God doth call out of their fenced cities, and allure into the wilderness) as the Jews were at from that appearance before the apostasy; and in as great danger are the children of the kingdom to be cast out now as then. Oh that my God would please to open the ear of some tender and upright-hearted among them to hear this testimony, that they might no longer stumble at that, which

alone is able to lead them to God, and to make them happy in God.

Is there any uniting with God, or enjoying of God, but by his Spirit? Is there any receiving of God's Spirit but within the heart? Doth he not appear there by his light, and in his power? What if God please to give forth a measure of his eternal light in the heart of his chosen, to open that to them which they could never see before, and to bring them into a nearer unity with him than ever they knew before, may he not do it? Nay, is not such a thing needful to help out of the deep and intricate apostasy, wherein have been so many twistings and twinings of the subtle serpent about every step or appearance of reformation, and to gather the wandering sheep, who were scattered up and down, and sorely distressed for want of the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to their estates and conditions? Have not every sort bent the Scriptures in the reasonings of their own minds, and made them speak according to their own heart's lusts? And is not every one wise in his own eyes, and strong in his own tower and fenced city? Surely there was great need of an appearance of the Lord to shut out the wisdom of man, and to help the poor, the needy, the fatherless, the weak panting babes. And blessed be the Lord God, who hath appeared; and blessed are those who have seen his light, and bowed at the feet of his living appearance, and felt the virtue of his saving arm, scattering their lusts and corruptions; yea, also raising up and bringing forth his pure seed in the fresh power, dominion, and authority of his perfect life, which reigneth in the hearts which the Lord hath regenerated and sanctified for evermore.

O my friends, my friends! that that eye might be once blinded in you which hinders the sight of God; and the eye opened which beholds his glory, and also taketh pleasure in his lowest appearance. The babe alone hath the mysteries of the kingdom revealed to him, (the wise and prudent are excluded; the birth after the flesh, in every one, must be famished and destroyed) and he alone can see in the eternal

light this dispensation of the everlasting gospel after the apostasy, which the Lord hideth from those who are wise in the letter of the former dispensation of the same gospel, but cannot read it as it was given forth in the Spirit then, nor as it is now again held forth in the same Spirit and power. O my friends! this is the truth to you (wait on the Lord, that ye may understand it from him): Your right eye must be put out, (which will never cease offending you, and causing you to stumble, so long as it is able to see) and all your knowledge which ye hold out of the life become as dross and dung to you, if ever ye taste and come to enjoy the excellency and glory of this appearance of God in his eternal Spirit, who hath descended from on high into the hearts of his chosen, to prepare them for his spiritual temple, that he may dwell in them, and they in him. And he will dwell in them, and they shall dwell in him, to the full delight and satisfaction of their hearts, and to the confusion of all those who remain despising and reproaching this his glorious appearance, and his people in whom he hath appeared. The day is not far off, wherein this will be made manifest; wherein great bitterness and anguish of spirit will befall those who can only see the glory afar off, but cannot inherit it, being found in that nature and spirit which is separated from it, and eternally shut out of it.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THAT

Portion of Scripture, ROMANS xiv. 20. for the service of such in this present age, whose eyes and hearts the Lord shall please to open, to see and consider the weight of the truth thereof.

With some few weighty words of advice to several sorts of people, according to their different states.

"For meat destroy not the work of God." Rom. xiv. 20.

OBSERVATION I.

God hath a work in some men's hearts.

THE mighty God, who made heaven and earth, and whose eyes run to and fro through both, he, by the finger of his pure power, toucheth some of the the hearts of the children of men, and in the pure demonstration of his living Spirit is found working there. Religion, true religion, is not a matter of opinion (as men, who have not tasted of the power, are apt to imagine), but a *new creation and work of God* in the heart of the creature, sowing the light and life of his Spirit there, and by it working man out of the darkness and death of sin (which is the destruction and misery of the soul), into his life and blessedness.

OBSERVATION II.

That this work of God in man is liable to be destroyed.

God could so have made man as that he could not have fallen. He could so have comprehended man's spirit in the pure power of his life, as that man could not have broke out of it. But it pleased him to make him under a law, wherein, waiting upon, and watching to, the power of life, he might be preserved, and remain happy; but departing from it, he should lose his state, and sink into misery. God could also so redeem man, as that no power should stop or interrupt his work; but it pleaseth him also to hold forth *a law of redemption*, according to which, his work of redemption may either go forward or backward. As man is drawn by the Spirit of God, and followeth his leadings out of the corruption, out of the vanity, out of the earthly nature, out of the wisdom, reasonings, and spirit of this world, so the work goeth forward. As man is tempted, hearkeneth unto, and is drawn back by any of these, from the leadings of God's Spirit, so the work goeth backward, and degrees of destruction overtake and come upon the work of God in that heart.

OBSERVATION III.

A little thing will destroy the work of God in the heart.

A matter of meat, eating but a little meat doubtingly, out of the faith (wherein is the preservation from the destruction), this leads into the sin, where death and destruction is still met with. For in the path of life, in the faith, in the obedience to God's Spirit, there alone is the preservation of the work of God; but in the unbelief, in the disobedience, in the doubting (though about ever so small a matter), there is death and destruction met with, if the person venture upon that which he doubteth of. Those who have travelled

in the path of life, I know can witness this. Oh, how small a thing brings a veil over the life! What a little giving way to the reasonings of the earthly spirit about a small matter drives back the work of God in the heart, and brings anguish and misery upon the soul, causing the hiding the light of God's countenance, which is the life and joy of the renewed spirit! God is a great king, and all his leadings and teachings are weighty; and he that rebelleth, or neglecteth in the least thing, must bear his burden, unless he feel the humiliation of his soul, and the remission from the spirit of the Lord, the grace of God pitying him, and the blood of his Son washing him.

OBSERVATION IV.

No man should do that which tendeth to destroy the work of God in himself, or the work of God in another.

There is no such thing allowable by God for any man to do (whether in public government, or in any kind of commerce or conversation amongst men, or in one's private course of walking) which tendeth to destroy the work of God. The intent of government, either in church or state, was never to destroy the work of God in any man. Government is of God, both in church and state. But that way of government which destroyeth his work in any, is not of him; but contrary to him, and against him. Oh that men could consider, and had the balance of truth to weigh things in, that they might bow before the God of truth, and not strive with their Maker about his work in the world!

My soul hath mourned, I may say, almost from my cradle, about the estate of this creation. To behold man fallen from his glory, departed from his God, living without the sense of him, and sowing the seeds of eternal misery for his poor soul (which he must as certainly reap as he hath sown, unless he travel the path of redemption in the powerful leadings and guidance of God's Holy Spirit); this hath so

broken my heart (together with the close exercises which have continually attended this poor wearied spirit), that I have often wondered how the natural life could be contained in the natural vessel.

I am a lover of mankind in general, and have been a deep sufferer with, and traveller for, all the miserable. None knows the path of my sorrows, or the extent of my bowels, but he that made me. It is not natural or kindly to me to upbraid any man with any kind of wickedness, or ever so justly deserved misery; but my bowels work concerning him towards the spring of eternal power and compassions, even as I would be pitied and represented to the Father of mercies in the like condition. Indeed I have been emptied from vessel to vessel, and tossed with multitudes of storms and tempests; yet the savor of my life remaineth with me to this day, and the Spirit of my God breatheth on my heart; blessed be his holy name for ever! And though I walk with one sort of people, because my heart saith (yea, the Spirit of the eternal God hath witnessed unto me, and shown me in that light which cannot deceive, and to that eye which cannot be deceived) that they are the people whom he hath chosen out of all the gatherings (throughout the earth) from the apostasy, to manifest his power in, and his presence among; I say, though I have been guided and led by the Spirit of the Lord to walk among these; yet am I not bounded there, either in the love, or in the unity of my heart, but I have unity with the integrity and zeal for God which is in others, of what sort or gathering soever; and I have tender bowels for all, even for those which hate and persecute that which is my life, and hath the love of my heart for ever.

Oh! how have I prayed for the lost world! For all the souls of mankind how hath my soul bowed in unutterable breathings of spirit before my God, and could not be silenced until he quieted my spirit in righteousness and excellency of his will, and bid me leave it to him. And as touching this nation, and the several sorts in it, even those who seem most cast off, and without all sense; yet the pre-

ciousness of their souls have I spread before the Lord my God with tears.

And now I have somewhat to say, in the love of my heart, and in the shinings of the light of my God, to several sorts of people, which nearly concerns them; as those whose hearts are weighty and serious (and who are not drunk up in the earthliness of the sensual nature, or misbiased by pre-assumed principles from the wrong ground) may easily perceive.

FIRST.

To such as never knew what belonged to tenderness of conscience towards God, but have spent all their days either in licentiousness of spirit, or in a dead formality; to such my soul saith:

Oh Friends! wait to feel the power of God upon your hearts (which is present with that which sometimes lets you see the evils thereof); that they may be melted and made tender by him, fit to receive the impressions of his life. Why should ye go down to the pit in a dream, and centre in the land of misery? Ye have immortal souls in these earthen vessels, which must either be redeemed to God by the power of his life, or be shut up from his glorious presence in the chambers of death. It is a dreadful thing to appear before God after death, and receive the sentence of condemnation for the things done in the body. Oh that the eye of your souls were awakened, that ye might see the hazard and danger ye are incurring daily; and might know the hope of escape set before mankind, by the appearance of the grace in you, and learn of the living God to fly thereto for succor, that ye might be sheltered in the evil hour, which hasteneth apace upon all flesh!

SECONDLY.

To such as formerly have been tender and sensible, but are now grown hard and deaf to the voice of God's Spirit in their hearts and consciences; this is the language of my soul in the love and life of my God:

Oh that ye could wait to feel the hammer and stroke of God upon that which is hard, that it might be broken by him; and that that which is high, and lifted up above his pure fear (where the law of his life is learned, and the souls of his saints preserved), might be brought down and abased before him! Great is your danger; exceeding difficult is your recovery. Yet there is strength in the arm of the Lord God to strike through your deadness, and to quicken the immortal principle of his life in you. Why should ye, who have once tasted of the goodness of God, become more miserable than the rest of the sons of men? Why have you departed from that which once gave you a true taste of life, and of the sweetness of redemption by it, into that spirit which is sealed up in the death, in the midst of its greatest wisdom, and surest footing? Oh, return, return to that which leadeth to the living God, that ye may travel (in the exercises of his Spirit) out of the wisdom and spirit of this world, unto the land of the soul's peace and rest!

THIRDLY.

To such as are still tender, and dare not but exercise a conscience towards God, even in these searching and trying times:

Friends, keep your standing in the life of God. What God hath begotten in you, let it depend upon him. Let him do what he will with his own in you, and let the creature be subject to that living principle, which God hath sown and raised in your hearts; sell not your peace with God for any ease or advantage in this world. Let the tenderness of your consciences, which is of value with God, be precious also in your eyes. The times and seasons are in the Father's hand, and he seeth good to let this day of trial come upon you. His grace is able to carry you all through. It will be for his honor, to let all the world see how dear your God is to you, and how able ye are (in the meekness and strength of the Lamb's Spirit) to suffer for his name's sake. Thy will, O God, be done. The cup which our

Father gives us, shall we not drink it? The Lord preserve you in uprightness of heart towards him, in meekness of spirit towards those that afflict you, and in true love and good-will towards all; that his light, which hath gathered you, may shine over all the darkness which opposeth it; and his life, which hath quickened and preserved you, may be famous over all the territories and dominions of death.

FOURTHLY.

To such as are hard-hearted, and of a persecuting spirit towards the tender-conscienced:

Oh that ye knew what ye did! Ye are enemies to the most precious thing to be found among the sons of men. Ye strike at what God loves and cherishes, and takes great pains to bring the creature to. Ye strive to keep that down upon which the happiness of mankind depends; yea, ye consult and take much pains to remove that out of the way, which stands between you and the judgments of God. Oh that your eyes were opened! for surely then ye could not proceed in this course.

Well! the Lord will open the eyes of many; and mercy towards mankind is issuing from his throne; and he will smite that through and through which maketh the earth miserable and desolate of his life. But oh that man could hear in the day of his prosperity, that adversity might not come upon him!

Wait to read these things in the life from which they sprang: and then tell me whether there is not a cause for what I write.

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE hath been a great apostasy, since the days of the apostles, from the living power, into dead forms of worship and devotion, where likenesses of truth have been set up, instead of the truth itself. Now the Lord is gathering his true seed (even Israel, his beloved offspring) out of all dead forms of all kinds, into his living truth, and into the true,

spiritual worship; and who is he that shall be able to stop him herein? Let him consider his strength, who girds himself to the battle against him: for not by might, nor by the power of man, but by the Spirit of life in his called, faithful, chosen, and innocent lambs, will the Lord of glory carry on his work in the world.

THREE

QUERIES

PROPOUNDED TO THE

KING AND PARLIAMENT,

IN THE FEAR OF THE MOST HIGH, AND IN THE TENDER LOVE OF MY SOUL TO THEM.

PREFACE.

THE main thing conducible towards man's safety and happiness, is to see things aright; and he that seeth aright, must see with a right eye. There is an eye which cannot see the things of God; there is a heart also which is insensible of his warnings, and so runs into the pit. There is also an eye, to which God giveth the true sight, which foreseeth the evil, and seeketh a hiding-place; and a heart which feareth its Maker, and waiteth on him for counsel, distrusting its own understanding, which it feeleth shallow and apt to err. Oh that man might feel his want of God, and receive a principle of divine life from him, and be fixed and act therein! If I should pray thus particularly for every one of you, would ye be offended with me? I have written somewhat here in the kindlings of my love, and in the light of life which shineth in my heart: oh that the Lord would please to open a vein of the same life in you! and then would ye read them in the same, and, in a secret sense of

spirit, feel what they are, and from whence they come. Now if it should please the Lord that any of you should feel any touches of heart, and secret assent of soul to the truth of them, oh! take heed of the fleshly wisdom and reasonings of the earthly mind, which will soon rise up afterwards, to wear out the sense of any good that God begets in the heart.

THREE QUERIES &C.

QUERY I.

WHETHER ye do certainly and infallibly know what was the ground or cause why the hand of the Lord was so heavy upon this nation, and why he overturned the government thereof, and brought the honorable into contempt?

Three things are supposed to be taken for granted in this QUERY.

First, That it was the hand of the Lord that did this. It is he that hath the anguish of soul, and the diseases of body, at his command; and afflicteth both men's bodies and souls at his pleasure. And he also afflicteth nations, with the powers and authorities thereof, when it seemeth good unto him. Now this is the thing which is mainly to be eyed by particular persons, and also by nations, in whatever befalleth them: to wit, the hand of the Lord in things.

Secondly, That there was a ground and cause for which the Lord did it. The Lord is tender-hearted, and loveth his creature, delighting to do it good, and doth not afflict it out of any pleasure he hath therein, but upon a kind of necessity, that he may bring down evil and bring up good in a nation. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." It is no pleasure to the Lord to torment his creatures; but to destroy the seeds of corruption and unrighteousness, and to bring up the good seed which he hath sown in the hearts of men, this is a pleasure to him. Now as your afflictions were very great, and the alterations

in this nation strange; so there was a consideration in the Lord's eye to countervail them, or they had never been.

Thirdly, That it is requisite and necessary for you, certainly and infallibly to understand the ground why the Lord did this; what his meaning was; what he was offended at, and intended to bring down; what he was pleased with, and intended to give scope to spring up and grow under this confusion; which could not under the former settlement.

The reason why this is necessary for you, is this: because unless ye certainly understand this thing, ye may err and mistake in your present course, setting up the same things now, which the heart of the Lord was then against, and endeavoring to suppress the same things, which it is the will of the Lord should grow up, and so may provoke the same hand against you again; which truly I think is not good for you to do, nor indeed can I think so of you, as that ye willingly would do it. Therefore pray to the Lord for the upright balance to weigh a thing of such a nature in, and of so deep concernment to you; for if ye do run a contrary course to the mind of the Lord, and he be provoked against you, and stretch forth his mighty arm and overthrow you, it will then be too late for you to consider of these things.

QUERY II.

Whether, when the Lord did overturn the former powers, with the glory and beauty of this nation, and raise up other powers out of the dust (as I may say), even from among them of low degree; if they had then answered what the Lord expected and required of them in their day, whether they should have been continued by him in their dominion or no, and whether ye should have had this day of trial, which it hath pleased the Lord now to afford you?

The day of power and government, which the Lord had given you formerly, was manifestly by his providence come to an end; and whether ever ye should have a day more, was very doubtful. All your councils and strength availed

nothing, save only to make the work more difficult, if not at length almost impossible. And now the Lord was busy in trying several sorts of these, what they would do for his name. And truly this I may say concerning them all (though I would not reproach any), that they did not answer the expectation of the Lord. But this I leave to you to consider, Whether, if they had answered the expectation of the Lord, and done what his soul delighted in, and what in part they promised, whether the Lord would have continued them in authority or no. I propose this, that ye may take notice upon what ticklish terms ye then stood, as to your future hopes, and how easily your authority and greatness might have been for ever buried, and that which was lately uppermost have continued so, if it had seemed good unto the Lord; that so ye may be sensible of what the Lord hath done in relation to you, and pray that ye may walk worthy of it, making use of it in the fear of his name, who hath all still in hand, and can still do what he pleaseth in this nation. Indeed he can yet bring down whom he will, and he can yet set up whom he will; and what he will do, ye know not; but in the fear of his dreadful name, and in holding your standing out of self-confidence (because of your present strength) is your safety.

QUERY III.

If ye do not certainly know what was the cause of the Lord's former displeasure against you, and of his so sore afflicting you, but shall err in judgment, and set up the same things again, which the Lord then put forth his hand to throw down, and also endeavor to crush and suppress that which the Lord then made way for the growth of, whether this will not endanger your overthrow from the hand of the Lord?

Sure I am, the Lord is able to overturn you as easily as he overturned them that were in power before you. *What is man to the Lord? What is his flesh to the Lord's Spirit?*

What great tree could stand before the late vehement wind (where the Lord gave it power); which was terrible and dreadful, tearing up by the very roots? which might be a figure and warning where the Lord gives eyes to read. After ye have done all ye can, even made laws as strong as ye can, and put them in the strictest course of execution ye can, one night from the Lord may end the controversy, and show whether we please the Lord in obeying him, or ye in making laws against us for our fidelity and obedience to him.

And as the Lord is able to overturn you, so if ye mistake your work, misinterpreting the passages of his providence, and erring in heart concerning the ground of his former displeasure; and so (through the error of judgment) set yourselves in opposition against him, replanting the plants which he will not have grow, and plucking up the plants of his planting; do ye not in this case provoke the Lord, even to put forth the strength which is in him against you? We are poor worms. Alas, if ye had only us to deal with, we should be nothing in your hands! But if his strength stand behind us, we shall prove a very burdensome stone, and ye will hardly be able to remove us out of the place wherein God hath set us, and where he pleaseth to have us disposed of. And happy were it for you, if instead of persecuting us, ye yourselves were drawn to wait for the same begettings of God (which we have felt) out of the earthly nature, into his life and nature, and did learn of him to govern in that; then might ye be established indeed, and be freed from the danger of those shakings and overturnings which God is hastening upon the earth.

Now because ye may be apt to think, that I write these things for my own sake, and the sakes of my friends and companions in the truth of God, that we might escape the sufferings and severity which we are like to undergo from you; and not so mainly and chiefly for your sakes, lest ye should bring the wrath of God and misery upon your souls and bodies; to prevent this mistake in you, I shall add what followeth. Indeed this is not the intent of my heart;

for I have long expected, and do still expect, this cup of outward affliction and persecution from you, and my heart is quieted and satisfied therein, knowing that the Lord will bring glory to his name, and good to us out of it: but I am sure it is not good for you to afflict us for that which the Lord requireth of us, and wherein he accepteth us; and ye will find it the bitterest work ye ever went about, and in the end will wish that the Lord had rather never given you this day of prosperity, than that he should suffer you thus to make use of it. Now that ye may the more clearly see the temper of my spirit, and how my heart stands in this thing, I shall a little open unto you my faith and hope about it, in these ensuing particulars.

First, I am assured in my heart and soul, that this despised people (called QUAKERS) is of the Lord's begetting in his own life and nature. Indeed, had I not seen the power of God in them, and received from the Lord an unquestionable testimony concerning them, I had never looked towards them; for they were otherwise very despisable in my eyes. And this I cannot but testify concerning them, that I have found the life of God in my owning them; and that which God hath begotten in my heart refreshed by the power of life in them; and none but the Lord knows the beauty and excellency of glory, which he hath hid under this mean appearance.

Secondly, The Lord hath hitherto preserved them against great opposition, and is still able to preserve them. Every power hitherto hath made nothing of over-running them; yet they have hitherto stood, by the care and tender mercy of the Lord; and the several powers which have persecuted them, have fallen one after another.

Thirdly, I have had experience myself of the Lord's goodness and preservation of me, in my suffering with them for the testimony of his truth, who made my bonds pleasant to me, and my noisome prison (enough to have destroyed my weakly and tender-educated nature) a place of pleasure and delight, where I was comforted by my God night and day, and filled with prayers for his people; as

also with love to, and prayers for, those who had been the means of outwardly afflicting me and others upon the Lord's account.

Fourthly, I have no doubt in my heart that the Lord will deliver us. The strength of man, the resolution of man, is nothing in my eye, in compare with the Lord. Whom the Lord loveth he can save at his pleasure. Hath he begun to break our bonds and deliver us, and shall we now distrust him? Are we in a worse condition than Israel was, when the sea was before them, the mountains on each side, and the Egyptians behind pursuing them? He indeed that looketh with man's eye, can see no ground of hope, nor hardly a possibility of deliverance; but (to the eye of faith) it is now nearer than when God began at first to deliver.

Fifthly, It is the delight of the Lord, and his glory, to deliver his people, when to the eye of sense it seemeth impossible. Then doth the Lord delight to stretch forth his arm, when none else can help; and then doth it please him to deal with the enemies of his truth and people, when they are lifted up above the fear of him, and are ready to say in their hearts concerning them; *They are now in our hands; who can deliver them?*

Well: were it not in love to you, and in pity (in relation to what will certainly befall you, if you go on in this course), I could say, in the joy of my heart, and in the sense of the good-will of my God to us, who suffereth these things to come to pass, *Go on; try it out with the Spirit of the Lord; come forth with your laws, and prisons, and spoiling of our goods, and banishment, and death* (if the Lord please), *and see if ye can carry it.* For we come not forth against you in our own wills, or in any enmity against your persons or government, or in any stubbornness or refractoriness of spirit; but with the Lamb-like nature which the Lord our God hath begotten in us, which is taught and enabled by him both to do his will, and to suffer for his name's sake. And if we cannot thus overcome you (even in patience of spirit, and in love to you), and if the Lord our God please not to

appear for us, we are content to be overcome by you. So the will of the Lord be done, saith my soul.

POSTSCRIPT.

O dear friends, hearken to the voice of the love of my heart, which speaketh thus unto you! Oh wait, wait to feel somewhat of God, somewhat of his divine life and power stirring in your hearts, and travel, in the light and leadings of it, out of the earthly nature, leaving the corruption of man behind, which makes you miserable, and putting on the holiness and righteousness of the nature of God day by day, which will make you happy, as ye are made partakers of it! Yea, do but come into the power of that religion which ye yourselves profess, not so much minding the outward form (for it is not of so much value), and ye shall find that we shall agree in religion sooner than ye are aware. Now if in your hearts ye shall ask me, what it is to come into the power of that religion which ye yourselves profess, I shall appeal unto your own souls whether it be not this; even to forsake the devil and all his works, taking up the cross unto your own hearts' lust and corrupt ways, and under this cross (wherein is the power of God felt by them that mind it, and wait upon God there with humble and subject spirits) to fight the battles of Christ against temptations to sin, and the soul's enemies, even until death. Here (if ye will enter at this narrow gate, and walk on in this strait way unto the kingdom, into which flesh and blood cannot enter, but the selfish nature and earthly spirit must be left behind) in this religion, which is indeed the substance of all true religion, we can readily meet and unite with you. But if ye will set up a form to stop the power and progress of the Spirit of the Lord in the hearts of his people in this nation, and not mind the power of religion yourselves, but with vehemency go about to force others to your form (which ye cannot truly say is of God, but of man), in this we cannot close with you, but must be content in the will

of God to suffer under you, the time which the Lord hath allotted, which ye cannot go beyond. And blessed for ever be the name of the Lord our God, who hath made us acquainted with that life and power which was before all forms and ways of religion and worship of man's inventing, and which will be after them; and who hath hitherto borne up our spirits in the testimony which he hath given us to bear to his living truth and worship, and who we doubt not will yet bear us up, even to a conquest in his Spirit over all that he hath called us forth to testify against. And that great city, or building of religion, which is built up by man's wisdom, and maintained by man's strength, we are sure is falling, and shall fall throughout all the earth; yea, man's striving to re-edify and re-establish it, will but make the ruins thereof more speedy and more dreadful. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, both in the Scriptures of Truth, which cannot be broken, and in the hearts of many of his servants, in this day of his appearance in Spirit to those, the eyes of whose spirits he hath opened, and by whom he hath given a visit and warning to the earth, which the earthly ear cannot hear, but will be overtaken and surprised with the day of the Lord. And oh, what running and seeking will there be to the rocks, and hills, and mountains, for a hiding place from the wrath of the Lamb! but none will be then found. O miserable, earthly-spirited man! (who hath passed away thy time in a dream, and hast little minded or regarded the salvation of thy soul, or considered what thy present vain pleasures and courses would tend to) what wilt thou then do? There is a pit prepared for the wicked (I speak not an imagination of mine own; indeed it is the truth of God).

Now the Lord seeks the souls of all lost men, to save them from the pit; but their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes veiled, their hearts grossly fatted and made insensible with the senses and delights of the earthly nature, and the voice of God (with the things that concern their eternal peace, yea, their present welfare also) cannot enter into them: and so they let slip the time of their redemption,

and waste away the season of their visitation, hardly ever so much as thinking what will become of them in the end. O Lord my God! awaken thy poor creatures, that they may live, and not die: rather let thy judgments break forth to awaken them, than that they should thus run on towards utter destruction, even to perish from thy life and blessedness, and to be swallowed up in the misery, torment, and wrath due to that nature which they have contracted, and wallowed like swine in. Every nature, principle, and spirit is travelling towards its end. O man! take heed what nature thou art of, in what principle and spirit thou actest, and towards what thou travellest. And remember that God loveth his creature; thy destruction is not of him, if thou perish; but in him is thy help, if thou hearken to his voice, and turn at the reproofs of that which he hath placed near thee, even in thy heart, to reprove sin in thee, and to beget thee into the love and holiness of his life and nature, leavening thee into a new man, as thou becomest subject to the checks and leadings thereof. This is pleasing to the Lord; that which proceeds from this, and is performed in this, is the true worship, and not that which man hath invented, and with which the earthly nature is quieted and satisfied, but the power of life turns from.

It is the great mercy of the Lord to stop any man in the way of his error, and happy is he that is stopped by him.

ANOTHER POSTSCRIPT.

Yet one thing, perhaps as my last unto you, let me freely propose; and be not hasty in spirit, but wait on God for skill and ability to weigh the thing aright, and to give an upright answer thereto, as before him, in the secrets of your consciences. It is briefly this: Why may not the power of religion be permitted to flourish under you? Cannot the government of God's Spirit and your government stand together? I beseech you consider it. No man knoweth how

short his time is, nor what is to come after his present determination of things. It is now your day? Oh, that ye had the true light to walk by in it, that ye might not afterwards repent; and that my heart might be gladded concerning you, who have so prayed for you, as if I had felt my own soul in your conditions!

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A

SALUTATION

OF

LOVE AND TENDER GOOD-WILL

TO THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE PEACE FOR THE COUNTY OF BUCKS, AND SUCH OTHERS IN THAT COUNTY, AND ALSO THROUGHOUT THE NATION, AS ARE CONCERNED IN THE CONTENTS HEREOF.

IF I should warn you of the day of the Lord (which is a day of terrible wrath to the transgressing nature, but of peace, love, and tender mercy to the righteous, innocent, suffering seed); if I should tell you that this day is hastening upon this nation, and upon the whole earth; and if this should affright you, and cause you to cry unto the Lord to deliver you from that nature, and from those sinful courses, which make you but fit fuel for his fire in the day of its hot burning,—I say, if by this means ye should be thus prepared for this day, and yet this day comes not so suddenly as ye might expect; yet that would be no loss, or cause of grief unto you. But if this day should suddenly come, and find

you in your sins, and so the fierce wrath of the Lord break in upon and afflict your souls, and the day of your mercy and redemption be wholly passed over by you; this would be matter of unutterable grief and sorrow to you, and the remembrance of your former ease and pleasures would but increase the sense and anguish of your misery.

Certain I am, there is a day of giving account for sinning against God, and for oppressing that in your consciences which discovers to you, and checks you for, your sins. And this will as certainly come, as the day of sinning now is; and then every man must receive from God according to his works, and reap the fruit of the deeds done in the body; then every soul must inherit according to its nature, and every vessel be filled with what it is fitted to receive: that which is fitted for mercy, with mercy; that which is fitted for wrath and misery, with wrath and misery; and then the distressed sinner will wish, *Oh that I had an hour to escape! Oh that God would once more give me a moment of repentance, and of turning from sin!*

Oh consider! is it a slight thing with you that the infinite God, who is little concerned in you (being perfectly blessed and happy for ever without you; but as his love, mercy, and tender nature, maketh him concern himself about the salvation of your souls), should give you so large a space of repentance, and so many discoveries of the evil of your ways (when at any time ye are retired and serious), and so many checks and warnings in your hearts, as the vilest of sinners, at times, have more or less from God? Can ye lengthen out the day of mercy? Can ye limit God how long he should strive with you? Oh! why do you harden your hearts? Why do you hearken to the lusts, desires, temptations, and counsels of the earthly mind, whose counsel hath undone all that have listened thereunto?

There is no way of avoiding the eternal insupportable wrath of God, but by travelling out of that nature, spirit, and course which it is to. Him that sowed to sin and corruption under the law, the sacrifices would not save then; nor him that soweth to sin and corruption under the gos-

pel, the sacrifice of Christ will not save now; but he that is saved by Christ must be sanctified and redeemed from sin and corruption by him; which Christ worketh by his principle of life sown in the heart; which principle turneth against the contrary principle, discovering its nature, and dark, evil ways, and drawing from, and leading out of them. Oh! therefore let me in love entreat you all, my dear countrymen (indeed I have no end in it but your good), to mind that in your hearts which discovers your evils to you; that therein ye may feel the power of life drawing you from them, and helping you against them. Greater is the power in this than the power that is in the contrary principle; as those that hearken to it, and become subject, by experience feel. And what if ye lose a few fond pleasures for the present (which indeed are beneath the true state of a man), ye will lose a great deal of misery too, and your gain at last will be exceeding great.

If ye would know whether I speak truth in these things, come to the true balance, and wait on the Lord, till by him ye be made able to weigh. My meaning is, join to the good Spirit of the Lord, when ye find it stirring in your own hearts; give up unto it, let in its strength upon you, in its warmth and drawing virtue; give up to forsake the evil, and pursue the good: fear not the multitude of evils in the heart, nor the long accustomedness unto evil; the Lord will help the willing soul out of them. And in this obedience to the good Spirit of the Lord, there will be an understanding received to know the things of God, and to try words and sayings, whether they be of him, or of man. And he that tries in this balance cannot be deceived (the measure being equal and just, and proper to the things which are therewith to be measured); whereas the wisest of men, trusting either to their own understandings and judgments, or to the judgments and understandings of others, are liable to be deceived; and then ye will acknowledge what love this sprang from, and what light and life it sprang up in, though through a weak and contemptible vessel.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Concerning Peace and Good-will.

The true peace is in the new nature, which puts an end to the warring and fighting spirit inwardly, and turns the whole strength of the battle against the enemies of the soul. In the old nature there are lusts after dominion, and after liberty to the flesh, and fulfilling the self-will of the earthly mind; but these are all brought down in the renewed spirit, by the power, love, and sweetness of the gospel of peace. Here is indeed uprightness of heart to the Lord, quietness of spirit under whatever the Lord suffers to be, and good-will towards all men; waiting on the Lord for his seasons of tender bowels, with strong cries and tears, even for those, who, to the eye of man, may seem so hardened against God and his truth, as to be out of the reach of mercy.

A

WEIGHTY QUESTION

PROPOUNDED TO THE

KING, AND BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

TOGETHER WITH SOME

QUERIES ABOUT RELIGION,

FOR THE

GOOD OF MEN'S SOULS,

THAT THEY MAY SEEK AFTER, AND BE ESTABLISHED IN, THAT WHICH GIVES LIFE.

QUESTION.

Whether laws made by man, in equity ought to extend any further than there is power in man to obey.

Is it not cruel to require obedience in such cases, wherein the party hath not a capacity in him of obeying?

Now in things concerning the worship of God, wherein a man is limited by God, both what worship he shall perform, and what worship he shall abstain from, here he is not left at liberty to obey what laws shall be made by man contrary hereunto.

The New Testament worship is to be in Spirit and Truth; which is a principle above man's reason, and cannot rightly be limited by a lower principle; but the lower principle in every man should be subjected to the higher, both in himself and others.

These things I write, not in pride or conceitedness, but

with an humble heart, and in love; that God may have his due, Cæsar his, and all men theirs; and that wrath from God may not break forth upon this nation; for surely it cannot but greatly provoke him, to see his people so deeply suffer for their obedience to him in what he requireth of them.

I am a lover of peace, truth, and righteousness, and a hearty desirer of the welfare and prosperity of this nation; and that it may no more be broken up in the wrath and indignation of the Lord; but that the peaceable and righteous seed, which he hath sown in the hearts of many, may be quietly suffered to grow up, to the praise of the Lord, and to the good of mankind.

This is from one, who was a mourner over you in your affliction, and is now also a mourner over those whom ye afflict.

I. P.

Some queries about religion.

Query 1. *What is true religion?* Is it a gift from God, bestowed on those whom he begets by the power of his life? Or is it a profession of worship of the nature of this world, which a man by natural parts and industry may attain to, as well as other things?

Query 2. What is the *sum and substance of the true religion?* Is it not love from a principle of life? Is it not a travel out of the enmity of the creature into the love of God? Doth not the light of life spring in the love, and gather into the love? Doth not Christ, revealed in the heart, and leavening the heart with the savor of life, teach love to enemies, to bear with them in love, to seek them in love, to forgive them in love, to pray for them in love, to wish good to them, and wrestle with God for mercy towards them, even while they are hating and persecuting?

Query 3. Are the Papists, or Protestants, or any other sort of religious persons, found in this love? Do they manifest it by their discipleship to Christ, and the power of

Christ in them? Or rather, do they not set up their several forms, and maintain them in wrath and enmity against each other? Nay, would they not destroy each other, if they could? Surely this spirit is in too many of them! And doth not this give a strong evidence against their religion, that it hath but a form, and not the true power in it, and that in heart they are not the disciples of Christ? For if they were such, they would of him learn the love.

Query 4. Whether any form of religion (if not held in the power, and subjected to the power) doth not fight against the power, keeping up an outside show without the substance, and thereby crushing the substance? What form of religion at this day in the world can suffer the love to grow, and the life to lead and rule in the love, and the Lord of life to exercise his authority in the hearts and consciences of men? And this is for want of power within, and because of forms forcibly set up without: for the religion of the gospel began in Spirit and in power, and it never can be restored and preserved but by the same Spirit and power. The renting of the Protestants from the Papists was no further good than it was in the power of the life; and the renting of others from the Protestants was no further good, than it was begun and held in the same power: nay, any party, though beginning ever so uprightly, and by ever so true and clear a leading of the Spirit of God; yet so soon as it begins to invent and turn aside to a form of its own choosing, and is upheld by the reasonings and understandings of men, it presently corrupts.

Query 5. Whether the power of religion (and the true love) if it were raised up and restored again, would make the world happy, and set every thing in its proper place, both inwardly and outwardly? Is not sense an excellent thing in man, if it be guided by reason? And is not reason a much more excellent thing, if it be guided by an inward principle of life? But sense left to itself, without the guidance of reason, how bruitish is it! And reason left to itself, without the guidance of a principle of life, falls below sense. How cruel, how blind, how selfish, how unrighteous is man,

that follows the dictates of his own corrupt reason, without knowing and becoming subject to that, which should enlighten it, and give him the right use thereof!

Query 6. Whether God will restore religion again in the power? Whether he hath such a work to do in the world? And whether the time be near that God is about such a work? And whether he hath already begun it, and made any progress in it? Is there such a thing as the power of religion sought after? Do men grow weary of their forms of worship, and find them empty, and unsatisfactory to the hungry soul, that pants after life? Nay, have there not been some touches and appearances of life and power, and of the true love, in some poor, weak, despised ones? Oh that men knew the times and seasons, and then perhaps they would see that this is not a day for setting up of forms, but of longing and crying out after life and power!

Query 7. When God restoreth religion, and raiseth it up in power, whether then forms and ways of worship, without the power, must not needs wither and decay? When the power first appeared in the dispensation of the gospel, did not all the shadows of Moses' ceremonies fly away, and vanish before it? And when it appears again, shall not all the shadows and inventions of man, which have sprung up since in the time of the night, vanish before the brightness of the light of the day? Where the power ariseth in any heart; what becomes of the man, with all that springs from him? Where is his wisdom? Where is his former worship? What becomes of all his forms of religion? Do they not all moulder and come to nothing, and he become as a little child, to be formed again in the power of life, and born of the Spirit of life, that he may enter into God's kingdom? Do not all the old things pass away, and new things spring up from the seed of life, which God sows and preserves in the hearts of his by his power?

Now who is wise to understand these things? Who hath the key to open the mysteries of life? Who knoweth the times and seasons (the times and seasons of forms, and the times and seasons of life and power)? Who seeth what

God is about to do in the world, and prepareth his heart for his administrations on the earth? Who is a friend to God, and to mankind, and willing to travel in spirit out of this dark, corrupt, earthly state of things, into the heavenly nature and being, where man was at first, from whence he came, out of which he departed, and can never be happy till he return thither again; and can never return thither by his own strength and reason, but only by the power and leadings of God, revealed in him, an inward principle of life? And he that will follow this must feel it in his heart, and then turn his back upon the earthly nature and wisdom, and war against his own corrupt reasonings, in and with the light of the principle of life, as it ariseth, and is further and further made manifest in his heart, through the grace and mercy of God, which thereby offereth its help to miserable, lost man, to redeem him out of his misery and undone estate.

Man hath a time here allotted him by God; and when the time is over, it is determined concerning him. He is a seeds-man in this world, and what he sows here he must reap hereafter. He soweth either to the flesh, or to the Spirit; either to his own will, or to God's will. He followeth either the ways of his own heart, or of God's Spirit. He either feels the power of religion, and is renewed thereby, and fitted for God; or contents himself with a form without the power, and in effect remains what he was.

He that is renewed, he that is changed in heart and life, he that soweth to the will and nature of God, shall inherit life with God. He that liveth in a form of religion without the power, and followeth the vanities of his own mind (going out of this world unrenewed and unfitted for God), shall be cut off from God, and lie down in sorrow and anguish of soul, where he will bitterly bewail his mis-spent time, and the losing of his soul's life and happiness, for the enjoying a few days the earthly nature and spirit in its corrupt and degenerated estate.

O man! whoever thou art, that art drowned in the lusts and pleasures of this world, which answer only to the sen-

sual and corrupt part! Oh! remember that thou hast also a precious soul, which wants redemption by the power of God to make thee happy. And one day this soul will be awakened in thee, and when it is awakened, it will feel its want of God. This is the day of God's stretching out his arm to thee; oh, slip it not out! for if thou dost, terrible will the day of thy awaking be; and thy misery unavoidable and intolerable. And if now the pains of thy body be so dreadful to thee, what will the tearings of thy soul be by the wrath of the Almighty? Lay it to heart, and retire inwardly, seeking to feel somewhat of God gathering and guiding thy soul out of thine own worldly nature and spirit, into the nature and life of his Spirit; that thy soul (at present separated from God, and drowned in the earth) may return to, and be happy in, the centre of life, from whence it came. For there is a centre of souls, as well as of the earthly nature; and *the spirit of man returneth to God that gave it*, as well as the body to the earth. And then the Lord appointeth it to its proper place, which is according to the nature it is found in. If it be *wheat*, if it be of the *renewed nature*, if it hath *taken up the cross, and followed Christ in the regeneration*, then he gathereth it into his *garner*. If it be of the *chaffy nature*, of the *earthly spirit;* the mind remaining unrenewed and unreconciled to the nature of God; then to *the unquenchable fire* (even the fire which will burn and scorch unquenchably) *and to the worm which dieth not;* but gnaweth perpetually, and bringeth to mind all the former vanity and mis-spent time, to increase the heat and flames of the fire. Oh! where is the soul, that, if it were not wholly bewitched and lulled into a dead sleep, by the stupefying spirit of this world, would run so great a hazard, for the enjoying of a few momentary pleasures in the sensual part, and lose thereby the inward enjoyment of peace and reconciliation with God here, and of the pleasures of his kingdom of true glory afterwards.

Now for a close, let me say one word (in the upright love, and true good-will of my heart) to this present generation, that they may consider and take heed (if possible); it is this:

Even as a father after the flesh is tender to the children he begets according to his nature, and would not suffer them to be wronged or destroyed, if he could help it; so is the Lord tender of those whom he begets in the nature of his life, and in his due season will appear for them, as surely as he is God, and as surely as he has begotten them out of the worldly nature unto himself, by the Spirit and power of his life. Therefore, oh! touch not any whom the Lord hath in the least measure anointed with his holy oil! For what is done unto the least of these *poor*, *naked*, *sick*, *imprisoned ones*, &c., he looketh upon as done unto himself; because he is one with them in the sufferings of their flesh, whom he hath made one with himself in Spirit.

CONCERNING

THE PERSUASIONS OF REASON AND FAITH

IN

MATTERS OF RELIGION.

THERE is the natural man, and the spiritual man; and there are the persuasions of each in and about matters of religion. There is the persuasion of reason, and the persuasion of faith.

The persuasion of reason is that belief which man receives into his mind or heart from the exercise of the reasoning faculty; and this persuasion in matters of religion is but man's opinion or judgment; which, how certain or infallible soever it appear to him, yet may be shaken by a demonstration or evidence of a higher kind and nature.

The persuasion of faith is that belief which the new creature receives in the renewed mind, from the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, which openeth and manifesteth the things of the Spirit, unto that mind which is begotten and renewed by it. And this persuasion is certain and infallible, however it may be struck at and battered, by the reasonings of the wise earthly part, even in that very man whose heart is thus persuaded, by the light of the Spirit of God, concerning the things of God's kingdom.

Now the lowest persuasion of faith is higher, and of a more noble nature, than the highest persuasion of reason; because faith is of a higher principle, and of a deeper nature and ground, than man's reason is. But this, because it appears not in man's sphere, but rather out of it, and is contrary to the line and reach of his wisdom, is accounted by him *foolishness and madness*. Thus is the wisdom of God

(and the children thereof) judged and condemned by man in this day.

And how can it be otherwise? How can the wisdom of man but judge that as foolishness, whose beauty and excellency is hid from its eye? But this is because the wisdom of man is out of its place, not subjected to the wisdom of God, but exalted above it; therefore (as a curse unto it) is it suffered to lift up itself in its conceitedness against, and so to persecute, the pure wisdom of God and the births thereof, that it might fall, and be broken, and snared, and taken, and its day deservedly come to an end, and be shut up in the shadows and chambers of eternal darkness.

But what ear of man can hear this! surely none that is whole in the line of man's wisdom, reason, and understanding; but that alone that is bruised, broken, and in some measure dashed in pieces, by the inroads of a diviner life and nature. This, in the leadings of that life which hath broken it, and in the shinings of the light eternal upon it and into it, may be enabled to take up the cross to the natural part, and to die that death with Christ, which preserves from the second death, with the misery thereof.

Happy is he, who knows and hearkens to the persuasions of God's Spirit, who is born of God, and taught to wait upon him and worship him in Spirit, who receives his religion from the light of faith, into the renewed nature and mind, and not from the reason of man into the natural understanding, which is easily corrupted, and cannot be kept pure, but alone by the indwelling of the principle of eternal life in it.

For though such may suffer very deeply in this world, from the men of this world (as the subjects and servants to the principle of life have done in all ages and generations), yet their principle will bear them out; in which God will appear to strengthen and refresh their spirits, and carry them up above all their sufferings, in the patience, meekness, and faith of the Lamb. And keeping to their principle they cannot be overcome, but must either live or die conquerors, according to the will and good pleasure of him

who ordereth and disposeth of all things well, and bringeth good out of every evil, in despite of all the powers of darkness. And he that overcometh (whether by life or death) in the Lamb's Spirit, shall wear the Lamb's crown, and sit down in that perfect rest in the kingdom of the Father, which will give the hearts of all his children full satisfaction. In which assured hope (life stirring in our bosoms, and quickening our hearts with love unto God, and zeal for his truth) we can freely give up all that is near and dear unto us in this world, and lay down our heads in inward peace, in the midst of the greatest outward persecution and trouble. Even so, O Lord, thy will be done concerning this generation of thy people, whom thou hast begotten to thyself, and brought forth by thy mighty power, to testify to thy truth in this present day. Dispose of them as it pleaseth thee; and let not their faith in thee, nor thy faithfulness to them, fail; but let them be a praise to thy name throughout all generations; and tendered by thee, as the first-fruits of thine appearance, in the glorious light of the everlasting day, after this great, long, thick, and dark night of apostasy from the life and spirit of the apostles, which hath so long eclipsed and covered the brightness of thy beauty from the sight of the earth.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME OF THE

MYSTERIES

OF

GOD'S KINGDOM GLANCED AT.

FOR THE

SERVICE OF THE UPRIGHT-HEARTED AMONG SEVERAL SORTS OF PROFESSORS, WHO HAVE FORMERLY HAD A FEELING OF MOST OF THESE THINGS IN MEASURE:

To which feeling, and that which gave it them, they are hereby allured and invited to return; that the many names and various ways may perish and vanish; and the One Spirit, One Life, One new, living Name and Way may be waited for and pursued after:

That so all the Tribes and Families, and several Divisions of ISRAEL may know one another, and heartily unite in one Nature and inward Power of Life, which doth good to all, and harm to none, neither inwardly nor outwardly.

By a traveller towards the living Substance, and a mourner over the wanderings of the scattered sheep.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

PREFACE.

None but Christ, none but Christ, saith my soul, from the sense of my continual need of him, and from the deep love of my heart unto him. Now there is a two-fold way of knowing Christ, both which are of use, and have their service in their several seasons, according to the estate and condition of the soul, and according to the dispensation which it pleaseth God to set up among his people; the one whereof is literal, the other spiritual; the one is according to a description of him received into the understanding; the other is according to the revelation or unveiling of him in the heart. As for instance, Christ may be preached as light, as life, as power, as the eternal Word and wisdom of the Father, &c. Now the receiving the knowledge of these things merely into the understanding, is a receiving and knowing Christ according to the letter, or according to a literal description of him; and the receiving of any of these things in the living sense and shinings of the eternal light of God in the heart, and so becoming subject in that life, sense, and power, is a knowing and receiving of them in spirit, and the spiritual submission and obedience of the gospel. This is the excellent way and path of life which God in this last age of the world is making manifest; though the other is not quite laid aside, nor to be rejected or despised, where there is any of the light of life stirring in it. But the main thing now to be minded is the heavenly birth, with God's dispensation of life to it, and its separation from the earthly birth, and its way of feeding on the heavenly things. For Hagar and Ishmael (which are the mother and child after the letter) are now to be cast out; and the seed of promise, with its mother, to abide in the house alone (with the Father of blessings) for ever. So that now the

separation goeth very near and close. The birth that is now raised is very inward and spiritual, even the seed itself; and its food is the life itself, even that which the earthly birth cannot feed on or digest; and the way and knowledge of life is very inward and spiritual, to cut off the earthly nature and spirit in its closest insinuations and transformings. The Lamb, in his appearances in this day, is very hidden and retired; and none can see his paths, and follow him, but such as receive of his present ointment, and feel the guidance of the opening of his eye in them. The Lord is bringing about great things, both inwardly and outwardly; happy are they whose hearts and spirits are prepared for them: for great misery, death, and destruction are coming upon the earthly, and great joy and blessedness are breaking up in, and showering down upon, the heavenly; which that all souls that have the breath of life in them, and that pant after the living God, may partake of, is the earnest desire of my soul.

SOME OF THE MYSTERIES &C.

Concerning Christ.

Quest. What is Christ?

Ans. He is the immediate offspring of eternal life in himself, and the fountain or spring of life unto the creation. "Even as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" and in and through his Son he communicateth of his life unto his creatures.

Quest. 2. How doth Christ convey life?

Ans. As the living Word; as the promised seed. He soweth the seed of the kingdom in the heart, in which is life: and as he maketh way for this to spread and grow up in and leaven the vessel, even so he quickeneth and gathereth into his life. Again, he is the enlightening word, the

quickening word, the word of wisdom, the word of power, the word of love and reconciliation, whose voice worketh mightily towards the destroying of sin, and saving of the soul from it.

Quest. 3. Where is this Word, or seed, to be waited for?

Ans. Its appearance is in the hearts of the sons of men, and there it is to be waited for. There God sows this seed; and there it is nigh to them whom God visits with his loving-kindness and mercy.

Quest. 4. How is this Word received?

Ans. By faith in the virtue which floweth from it. Its nature is to turn against sin, and to draw towards the Father. Its light shineth to discover sin, and its life stirreth to quicken against it. Now in the heart's believing, and being persuaded against that which the light discovereth to be evil, and won to that which it showeth to be good, the word is thus far received, and a foundation of union between it and the soul laid. And so, on the other hand, in the rejecting or turning from any thing that comes from Christ in the heart, Christ is rejected and turned from.

Quest. 5. How doth this Word work in or upon the heart?

Ans. According to the entrance it gets into the heart, or according as it is rejected or refused. As it gets entrance, it works life there, and works the creature into its life. It brings in its nature, its righteousness, its holiness, its sweetness, its peace, its love, its joy, its meekness, its patience, &c., as it makes room in the heart, by working out the contrary. But where it is rejected, it works death and condemnation, and increaseth the captivity and misery of the soul; so that it were better never to hear any sound of Christ in the heart, than not to hearken and become subject thereto.

Quest. 6. What hinders union with Christ?

Ans. The strong man armed, whom he cometh to dispossess; who doth what he can to blind the eye from seeing the lovely nature of Christ, and to harden the heart against his visits and appearances.

Quest. 7. How may the soul be helped against him?

Ans. Receiving the truth in the love, and giving up the heart in the virtue that flows from Christ in his visits and appearances, brings in that strength into the soul which conquers him. He is not able to stand before the power of Christ; which power is the soul's as it is let in by the soul. It is the unbelief of the heart, and the earthly thoughts and imaginations, which give the enemy strength: but before the faith, even in the weakest, he is weak, and his strength falls.

Concerning the way of knowing Christ.

Christ is the minister of the true sanctuary, which God hath pitched, and not man. There is a city, "whose builder and maker is God." The foundation-stone, the corner-stone, the top-stone, of this city or building, is Christ. He therefore that would know Christ, and be built upon Christ, must find a holy thing revealed in his heart, and his soul built thereon by him, who alone can raise this building, who can rear up the tabernacle that hath long been fallen down, who can build up the old waste places, and restore the paths for the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord to walk and travel on in.

Now he which can find any thing of God built up in his heart (yea, if he can find but the beginning of the true sanctuary), he may also find Christ ministering there; even the true high-priest offering up the sacrifices, and interceding with the Father; as also giving the soul the food of the holy things to eat of. Now this is the way of Christ indeed; to wit, in his begettings in the heart, in his presence there, in his ministrations there, between the soul and the Father. And he that thus knoweth him, even in that which is begotten of him, watching in singleness of heart with the true eye, cannot be deceived concerning him, but knoweth the voice of his Spirit, and readily embraceth it; but a stranger or deceiver it knoweth not, and will not hear, but by the instinct of life turneth from it. So that the knowledge and

preservation of the sheep is not by the wise reasonings of the mind concerning the shepherd's voice and the stranger's voice; but by an instinct of the new hidden nature, which teacheth the simple-hearted to avoid the snares which the earthly wisdom is easily entangled in. The meek, the humble, the broken-hearted, the weak, the poor, the babes, the little children, these are they whom the Father teacheth; these have that preservation and instruction, which the wise, knowing, judicious minds (in man's account) miss of. Thus *the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God stronger than man.* And God hath chosen in every man *that which is not*, to bring to nought *all that is* in him, that no flesh might glory in his presence, nor no man be able to boast before the Lord of the salvation of his soul.

Concerning Repentance.

Quest. 1. What is repentance?

Ans. It is Christ's turning of the heart from the dead nature, and from the dead works, towards the living principle, and the living works thereof.

Quest. 2. Cannot a man turn from sin, and turn to God when he will?

Ans. No; man is a captive, his understanding captive, his will captive; all his affections and nature in captivity; and nothing can turn him towards God, but that which is stronger than that power which captivateth him.

Quest. 3. How is repentance wrought?

Ans. It is Christ's gift, whom God hath appointed a prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins, who giveth it in its enlightening and drawing virtue, wherein sin's nature is opened, and the bent of the soul by him secretly turned against it.

Quest. 4. What is the heart turned from, and what is it turned towards?

Ans. From one nature to another, from one principle to another, from one spirit to another, from one course to another, from one end to another.

Quest. 5. Is repentance wholly given, or perfected, at first?

Ans. No; but it increaseth, and is given daily more and more to the heart that waiteth on the Lord. Sin, the nature of it, the course of the mind and body in it, is discovered daily more and more, and the loathing and detesting of it increased, as the new nature gathers strength in the mind, and increaseth in the light and power of life.

Quest. 6. Is there never to be any reconciliation or turning back to sin?

Ans. No; but a further removing and separation from it; which separation is eternal, even as the beginning of it is in an eternal nature. The seed, at its first appearance and springing up, shutteth out sin, as being of a contrary nature to it; and the stronger it groweth, the more it shutteth sin out: and where it wholly leaveneth and possesseth the creature, it wholly expelleth the old leaven, and leaveth no place for it to re-enter. This is perfect salvation, where there is no turning back to folly any more, but a perpetual abiding in the nature of the eternal wisdom.

Quest. 7. What if there be a committing of sin after one is turned from it?

Ans. The repentance is not there perfected; the enemy is not there wholly cast out, nor his strength quite broken; the law is not there fulfilled, the covenant of grace is not there fully witnessed; but the soul still in a degree of captivity under the power of the enemy: yet if the bent of the heart be against the sin committed, God chargeth it upon the enemy, and not upon the soul. "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom. vii. 20.

Quest. 8. But is there any sin where there is no law? What makes sin but the law? When a man hath travelled through the law into the eternal nature, can he then commit sin?

Ans. Where there is no law, there can be no transgression; but while any of that nature remains to which the law naturally belongs, there may be sin and transgression.

Now that only is capable of being out of the reach of the law, whose nature is perfect, and which comprehends and cannot but bring forth the righteousness of the law in it. That therefore which falleth short of the righteousness of the law, and pleads it is not sin to it, is in the deceit and error from the perfection, and not in the perfect righteousness, which eternally comprehends and brings forth the righteousness of the law; but is not comprehended or judged by it, because its nature, life, and righteousness is above it.

Concerning Faith.

Quest. 1. What is faith?

Ans. It is a belief in the appearances of the Lord to the soul, and a cleaving to, and drinking in of, their virtue. There are divers appearances of the Lord, even as a quickening Spirit, quickening and enlivening the soul; also as a discoverer, reprover, and condemner of sin, and justifier of righteousness; likewise as a strengthener and comforter of that which wants his strength and comfort; and as a fountain of perfect love, sweetness, and of all good, &c. Now however the Lord pleaseth to appear, that which seeth, knoweth, owneth, and falleth in with his appearances, drinking in the virtue thereof, that is faith.

Quest. 2. By what means is faith wrought?

Ans. By the Word in the heart; by the living Word from which the soul came, and which is nigh to the soul. This was the Word of faith, or the Word which wrought faith under the law. Deut. xxx. This was the Word of faith which the apostles preached, and which wrought faith under the gospel. Rom. x. This is the Word which we feel working faith in us now; yea, and which worketh it in all those in whomsoever it is wrought; though they may not know what works it: yea, this is the seed of life, from which every spiritual thing springs and grows in the heart.

Quest. 3. How is faith received?

Ans. In the quickening power. The seed of life shoots

forth its light, its life, its nature, its virtue into the heart. The heart being touched with this, is in some measure quickened towards God, and in and from this quickening virtue faith flows into the soul. For in the death of sin, in the dead state, there is nothing but unbelief; faith therefore must needs flow from the quickenings of life.

Quest. 4. What doth faith do in the heart?

Ans. It uniteth to God, and separateth from sin. It beginneth and carrieth on the work of redemption in the soul. It receiveth in that which is of God, and beateth back the contrary. It keepeth the mind chaste, pure, living, and fresh before the Lord. It draweth out the virtue, and sucketh in the sweetness of every appearance of God in the heart. It keepeth in the love of God, and expelleth the love to sin, creature, self, or any thing as it stands out of God. Indeed faith is the natural sucker-in of the breath of life, and the purger-out of the breath and power of death.

Quest. 5. Wherein doth faith stand?

Ans. In that wherein it is received, even in the quickening power. Faith must be continually kept alive by the seed of life, or it cannot live. It springs in the power, it dwells in the power, it acts in the power, and is never found out of it. Man cannot believe when he will; it is a continual gift, depending upon the continual quickenings and nourishment of that life from whence it sprang.

Quest. 6. But doth not God withdraw? Doth not the power often clap in? Where is faith then?

Ans. There is the secret presence of the power, when it is not visibly manifest, enabling the soul to keep to, and depend upon, that which is not seen, but trusted in, though unseen, and not sensibly felt: and there is a secret turning from, and resisting of temptations, and a secret overcoming (the heart being kept true and entire to the Lord) while the enemy seemeth sensibly to prevail and overcome.

Quest. 7. Why doth the enemy so assault with unbelief, and fight so stiffly against the faith of the soul?

Ans. Because all depends upon it. Stop that, he stops all; overcome that he overcomes all. If that stand and

abide in strength, he gains nothing; but loses by every temptation and seeming victory; for faith gets ground and advantage not only by a temptation, but also by a fall.

Concerning Hope.

Quest. 1. What is hope?

Ans. The expectation of somewhat from the Lord, in the season of his good-will. The expectation of the crown of life at last; the expectation of deliverance from snares and temptations at present; the expectation of receiving his promises of the divine nature, or of any mercy or blessing which he hath given to pray for; this is hope.

Quest. 2. What are the grounds of hope to the soul?

Ans. There are manifest and visible grounds, or a secret and invisible ground.

Quest. 3. What are the manifest and visible grounds?

Ans. They are many, and of divers kinds. The Lord's love manifested to the soul; the Lord's promises made to the soul particularly, or generally to that condition wherein the soul is; the soul's experience of the Lord's helping it in former distresses; yea, the very tender nature of the Lord towards souls, and their descent from him, notwithstanding their present alienation and corrupt estate, is a ground of hope, where the Lord quickens it to the heart.

Quest. 4. What is the invisible or secret ground of hope?

Ans. That cannot be discerned which is secret and invisible; but yet there is sometimes a hope in the heart, when it is not perceived, which is maintained and fed by the invisible life, which is hid there.

Quest. 5. What is the nature and proper effects of hope?

Ans. It stays the mind, even in the midst of storms and tempests, that they do not overturn, overwhelm, and sink the soul. It keeps up the head above the many waters, and keeps the heart from utterly fainting. It preserves life in the many famines and strait sieges of the enemy. Hope of relief keeps from yielding to the enemy, and preserves from distrusting the Lord. Distrust cannot enter and pre-

vail, where hope abides. Hope adds strength to the soul in its pursuit of all that is good, and in its flying from and eschewing all that is evil, and is the succorer of faith in the needful hour: yea, how often would the faith be given up and foiled, were it not for the hope which relieves it!

Concerning Love.

Quest. 1. What is love?

Ans. What shall I say of it, or how shall I in words express its nature! It is the sweetness of life; it is the sweet, tender, melting nature of God, flowing up through his seed of life into the creature, and of all things making the creature most like unto himself, both in nature and operation. It fulfils the law, it fulfils the gospel; it wraps up all in one, and brings forth all in the oneness. It excludes all evil out of the heart, it perfects all good in the heart. A touch of love doth this in measure; perfect love doth this in fulness. But how can I proceed to speak of it! Oh that the souls of all that fear and wait on the Lord might feel its nature fully! and then would they not fail of its sweet, overcoming operations, both towards one another, and towards enemies. The great healing, the great conquest, the great salvation is reserved for the full manifestation of the love of God. His judgments, his cuttings, his hewings by the word of his mouth, are but to prepare for, but not to do, the great work of raising up the sweet building of his life, which is to be done in love, and in peace, and by the power thereof. And this my soul waits and cries after, even the full springing up of eternal love in my heart, and in the swallowing of me wholly into it, and the bringing of my soul wholly forth in it, that the life of God in its own perfect sweetness may fully run forth through this vessel, and not be at all tinctured by the vessel, but perfectly tincture and change the vessel into its own nature; and then shall no fault be found in my soul before the Lord, but the spotless life be fully enjoyed by me, and become a perfectly pleasant sacrifice to my God.

Oh! how sweet is love! how pleasant is its nature! how

takingly doth it behave itself in every condition, upon every occasion, to every person, and about every thing! How tenderly, how readily, doth it help and serve the meanest! How patiently, how meekly, doth it bear all things, either from God or man, how unexpectedly soever they come, or how hard soever they seem! How doth it believe, how doth it hope, how doth it excuse, how doth it cover even that which seemeth not to be excusable, and not fit to be covered! How kind is it even in its interpretations and charges concerning miscarriages! It never overchargeth, it never grates upon the spirit of him whom it reprehends; it never hardens, it never provokes; but carrieth a meltingness and power of conviction with it. This is the nature of God; this, in the vessels capacitated to receive and bring it forth in its glory, the power of enmity is not able to stand against, but falls before, and is overcome by.

Concerning Obedience.

Quest. What is obedience?

Ans. It is the subjection of the soul to the law of the Spirit; which subjection floweth from, and is strengthened by, love. To wait to know the mind of God, and perform his will in every thing, through the virtue of the principle of life revealed within, this is the obedience of faith. This is the obedience of the seed, conveyed into the creature by the seed, and it is made partaker of the seed. He is the son who naturally doth the will; he is the faithful witness who testifies concerning the will; yea, and he is the choice servant also.

Mark how every thing in the kingdom, every spiritual thing, refers to Christ, and centres in him. His nature, his virtue, his presence, his power, makes up all. Indeed he is all in all to a believer, only variously manifested and opened in the heart by the Spirit. He is the volume of the whole book, every leaf and line whereof speaks of him, and writes out him in some or other of his sweet and beautiful lineaments. So that if I should yet speak further of other things,

as of meekness, tenderness, humility, mercy, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, contentedness, &c. (all which I had much rather should be read in his book, even in the living book of the eternal Word, than in my writings), I should but speak further of his nature brought up, manifested, and displaying itself in and through the creatures, by his turning the wheel of his life in their hearts. But my spirit hasteneth from words, therefore can I not but cut short and pass over these openings in me, that neither my own soul nor others may fix or stay upon words concerning the thing, but may sink in spirit into the feeling of the life itself, and may learn what it is to enjoy it there, and to be comprehended of it, and cease striving to know or comprehend concerning it. And then I am sure he that hath a taste of this cannot but be willing to sell all the knowledge that can be held in the creaturely vessel, for that knowledge which is living, and is laid up in that treasury, into which the thief and corrupter can by no means steal or break. Yet somewhat I cannot but further add concerning peace, joy, liberty, prayer; as also concerning regeneration, justification, sanctification, reconciliation, and redemption; because my heart believeth that it may prove serviceable to some, in the guidance and mercy of the good Spirit of the Lord.

Concerning Peace, or Rest.

True peace is the stillness, the quietness, the satisfiedness of the heart in God, which floweth from and with the Spirit of life in the soul, that is subjected to Christ. There is indeed a kind of peace; to wit, a false peace or rest in sin and unrighteousness; but this is not truly natural to the soul while it lasts, and is likewise suddenly disturbed when the true light shines in the heart, and when God's witness awakens it. Then "there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." Oh, the trouble and perplexity of the sinner, when the light of God's Spirit makes his heart and ways manifest to him! yea, and that soul also, which in its day

of visitation pants after the Lord, and is willing to give up to the guidance of his light, and waiteth for the directing and redeeming power of his Spirit; yet oh, what a bitter war, noise, and tumults doth the enemy raise within! How doth it disturb every step of his way, and strive to darken every drawing, motion, and leading of the soul out of his dominion! But as the redemption is felt, the snares broken, the life manifested, and the soul feels itself entered into the nature and obedience of it; so the peace springs, and the rest in God is tasted of and enjoyed.

Concerning Joy.

Joy is the gladness of the heart in God, chiefly springing from the refreshings and presence of his life, which carries through and over all, even the greatest trials and tribulations. When the poor, panting, weary soul, which hath longed after God, and long felt the bitterness and misery of its separation, begins to feel his love, and its union with him, in his letting of it forth into the heart, and its assurance of his goodness, righteousness, power, wisdom, and salvation, oh, how is it filled with joy and delight in the earnest of its portion! Now saith it, in the strength of life, My soul rejoiceth in God my Saviour; for he hath regarded my low estate, his bowels have rolled towards me, his day-spring from on high, and his mercies from beneath, have visited me; and I, who long have been desolate and forsaken, have now found favor in the eyes of my beloved, and my heart feeleth (in measure) that I am his, and he mine, who hath touched me, won my heart, undertaken for me, and what can separate? He hath tied the knot himself, and what can break it? And how can my heart but rejoice in his name over all my fears, false reasonings, doubts, and misgivings, which long held me captive, and withheld my eye from reading love, the which was written both in his heart, and in his dealings towards me?

Concerning Liberty.

Liberty is the enlargedness of the heart in the Spirit of the Lord, wherein it hath scope in all that is good, and is shut out of all that is evil. The Spirit of the Lord is free, and maketh free. The earthly spirit is in bondage with her children; but they which are begotten of the Lord, and wrapped up in his Spirit, find the power and freedom of the new life therein, and are thereby perfectly out of the reach of that, which (let into the mind) hath power to captivate and inthrall. Therefore it is not all manner of scope and latitude, wherein the true liberty consisteth; but in the scope and latitude proper to its nature. And thus the infinite and unlimitable One is limited (if it be proper so to express it), even within the limits and bounds of his own nature and Spirit, which he cannot transgress, or in any wise consent to do what is contrary thereunto.

Concerning Prayer.

Prayer is the breath of the living child to the Father of life, in that Spirit which quickened it, which giveth it the right sense of its wants, and suitable cries proportionable to its state, in the proper season thereof. So that mark: prayer is wholly out of the will of the creature, wholly out of the time of the creature, wholly out of the power of the creature, in the Spirit of the Father, who is the fountain of life, and giveth forth breathings of life to his child at his pleasure.

Concerning Regeneration.

Quest. 1. What is regeneration?

Ans. It is the new birth of the creature, or its being born again of the immortal seed of the word of eternal life.

Quest. 2. How is this birth obtained?

Ans. By the springing up of the seed of eternal life in

the heart, and the heart being changed into it, and brought forth in it.

Quest. 3. How is the heart changed into and brought forth in the seed?

Ans. By being leavened with the power and virtue of its nature by a new sap received from it, which spreadeth by degrees, and at length becometh all in it.

Quest. 4. How is this virtue received from the seed?

Ans. In giving up to it in the faith which flows from it: this lets in the new sap and nature of life, which purgeth out the old.

Quest. 5. How doth the seed appear and manifest itself, and how is it given up to in the faith?

Ans. It doth appear in its own light and quickening virtue, which discovers the darkness and death of sin, and draws the heart, which it makes willing, out of it. Now its drawings being felt, it is well known, the thing required by it made manifest, there is a faith herein begotten in the heart; and then the soul is to give up in the obedience of the faith, without consulting with the reasonings and wisdom of the fleshly mind, where the enemy lies ready to damp this light of faith, and betraying into the unbelief.

Concerning Justification.

Quest. 1. What is justification?

Ans. It is the owning or clearing of a person in his obedience to the Lord; or the pardoning, passing by, and so clearing him from his disobedience.

Quest. 2. Who is it that justifieth?

Ans. It is the Lord, who giveth the law to mankind according to his pleasure; he it is that is also the judge of man's obedience or disobedience thereto, and the proper justifier or condemner of him therein.

Quest. 3. But is not man in a fallen state? And can he so obey God in any thing as to be justified by him?

Ans. Man is indeed fallen, and hath no strength or will of himself to serve or obey the Lord; but there is a visi-

tation of life and love (for Christ's sake) issuing forth towards mankind in general, wherein there goeth forth a quickening life, and a secret, hidden virtue, which giveth ability to the hearts which the Lord maketh willing to follow his drawings. And this dispensation is so managed by the Lord, that no man perisheth for want of power, but only from the stubbornness and choice of his own will. So that man's destruction is indeed of himself everywhere; but nowhere of God, whose delight is to save, and not to destroy, his creature, under every dispensation of his life.

Quest. 4. But many men do not know Christ, and how can they obtain justification by him?

Ans. There is a double knowledge of Christ; outwardly, by a relation concerning him, and inwardly, by feeling the virtue of his nature. Now thus many know Christ, who know him not outwardly. They may have somewhat sown, touched, and raised by God, of the nature of Christ in them, and in this they may know the Father, and spring of the same nature, and be gathered in heart into it, and so come within the line or compass of the spiritual life, wherein the spiritual blessings and mercies run and flow through Christ, and for his sake. And so here they may see their sins, and be loaded with them, and feel the life and virtue that washeth from them, and that it is in the mere mercy of God, and so be drawn out of self into the nature, life, virtue, and power of Christ, which is conveyed in substance in the inward feeling and new-creating of the heart.

Quest. 5. How is this justification wrought?

Ans. By faith in the virtue which floweth from Christ. God letting in of the nature of his Son into the heart, and begetting therein somewhat of his own likeness, in which he draweth, and which he giveth to believe in: this faith is imputed by God for righteousness, in every heart wherever it is found; and where this faith in the living virtue is found, there God blotteth out the iniquities for his name's sake; yea, and remission is felt in that which is made living. And there is one near, who hath power to bind or loose in the conscience, according to the nature of the dispensation;

and who doth bind or loose in every dispensation as he findeth cause. But all loosing of sins is for Christ's sake, and through his blood; though every one in every dispensation is not able distinctly so to read it. Yea, under the law, the remission was by this sacrifice; though many of the Jews could not read the type. The promise is to the seed of the kingdom, and to man in the seed; and there it reacheth him whenever it findeth him; for in all his gatherings into, and being found in, that, he is blessed.

Quest. 6. Then may a man be justified who never heard outwardly of Christ?

Ans. If he feel the seed of life, be overcome by its nature, give up to its law, as it is made manifest in his heart, abhor the nature and law of sin and death, and thus in soul cleave unto the Lord, and follow him as he pleaseth to lead, the Spirit and life of the Lord cannot but herein justify him; and the grace and mercy of the Lord cannot withhold giving him out his pardon for his sins past (and also pass by his future frailties), although he distinctly know not how to sue out and plead it. The redemption and pardon of sin is through the unlimited grace of God: which is not restrained to the outward knowledge of the creature, but issueth forth according to the capacity that God creates any where to receive it. Life, mercy, grace, pardon, &c. issue forth from God into the vessels of every kind, under every dispensation that he prepareth for them: and the inward sense of life is the thing that God aims at in all his dispensations, and not the outward skill or knowledge, but thrusts that by in every dispensation, except as his inward life and virtue is found in it.

Quest. 7. How is justification by grace?

Ans. No man in his fallen estate can deserve any thing of God. It is of grace that God visits him by any dispensation of his love and mercy. It is of grace that he giveth him any ability to turn unto him. It is of grace that he accepts him in turning, giving him a share in the ransom he hath found, which is still in God's eye in whatever he does for man, however man may be off from it. Indeed such is

the weakness of man, that no man can be justified by the works of obedience that he can perform under any dispensation, but only by the remission and ability which he receives from grace, and wherein alone he can be preserved unto the end by grace. So that in every dispensation it is grace alone that saves (through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ), though from the eye of man this hath been very much hidden in divers dispensations. Yet, notwithstanding, the broken and humble-hearted ones (who have felt the inward power of life to change their natures, and to preserve them in that which God hath begotten in them). the grace prevaileth to save in every dispensation. For it is not the outwardness of any dispensation, but the virtue let forth from God in the heart, which saves. And by this the Lord can save under any dispensation, and without this there is no salvation in any.

Quest. 8. What is the righteousness that justifieth in the sight of God?

Ans. The righteousness of Christ alone. This conveyed to the creature in and through the seed, and brought forth in the creature by the seed, and the creature united to Christ in the seed; here is the justification of the life. Indeed there is also a justification according to the works of the law, or the creaturely obedience, which the Lord will so far own as the creature is able to bring it forth: but it is the obedience of faith which is the pleasure of his soul. And the other can hardly ever be perfect, so as the Lord can spy no fault in it, and may also easily fail, depending upon the brittle nature and spirit of the creature; whereas this is of an abiding nature, having its root not in the creature, but in the seed. Therefore, O all that love life! descend from the outwardness of dispensation into the hidden seed, where we may feel the living God, and all that are in any living dispensation of his life, as the Lord pleaseth to let our spirits into him, and into one another. And wait for the light and power of this blessed day (which in the tender mercy of the Lord hath dawned from on high upon us) which discovereth and maketh things known, not after

the letter of a dispensation, but by manifesting their inward nature, power, and virtue in the endless life, of which Christ is now become the minister in the living sanctuary in those whose hearts he hath new-formed, and dwelleth in.

Concerning Sanctification.

Quest. 1. What is sanctification?

Ans. It is the cleansing of the vessel by the Spirit of the Lord, from the pollution both of flesh and spirit.

Quest. 2. And by what doth the Spirit of the Lord cleanse the vessel from its pollution?

Ans. By the living truth, which hath power in it to wash away the deceit, enmity, impurity, and whatever evil hath formerly defiled, or may yet again at any time defile the vessel.

Quest. 3. How doth the soul receive this cleansing or purifying from the Spirit of the Lord?

Ans. In its obedience to his truth made manifest in the heart; for thereby the power of the Word enters into the soul, and sheds abroad its living virtue in the soul.

Quest. 4. What then is chiefly to be minded by the soul, that would be cleansed from its filthiness?

Ans. The obedience of faith, or the obedience which springs from faith. For as all the benefits and blessings of the law depended upon obedience to the law; so all the benefits and blessings of the gospel depend upon obedience to the gospel. Yea, and this is the glory and excellency of the gospel that the principle of faith there doth that which the principle of the law could never do.

Concerning Reconciliation.

Quest. 1. What is reconciliation?

Ans. It is a bringing together the minds and hearts of God and man into one.

Quest. 2. How is this wrought?

Ans. By taking away the enmity of man's nature, which

is therein against God, and by planting him into, and causing him to grow up in, that nature and life which God loveth, whereby that is removed from man which God hateth, and which is the cause of separation; and man brought into, and brought up in, that which is the love and delight of God's heart.

Quest. 3. By what is this reconciliation wrought?

Ans. By the Word of God's power. That comes forth from the love of God unto man; and man being gathered out of himself into that, the evil seed is thereby destroyed, and the good seed of the kingdom thereby cherished, and groweth up in its shadow and nourishment.

Quest. 4. How doth the Word work this?

Ans. By winning upon man, and gathering him into its light, out of man's own darkness, exercising man various ways to empty him of himself, and make him weak in himself, and putting forth its own strength in and for man, as it hath emptied and weakened him in himself.

Quest. 5. What then is man's great advantage towards reconciliation with God?

Ans. To become weak, to become poor, to become helpless, to become nothing by the frequent exercises of the word of reconciliation in the heart: for the poor receive the gospel, and the weak receive God's strength, and the helpless his mercy, and the nothing-ones his fulness.

Concerning Redemption.

Quest. 1. What is redemption?

Ans. It is the purchasing of the vessel out of the captivity and misery of death, into the liberty and blessedness of the divine life, sown, revealed, grown up, and perfected in the heart.

Quest. 2. Who is the redeemer?

Ans. The Son of God, the child of God's begetting, the divine image, who naturally believes and fulfils the will of the Father, in every vessel which it hath prepared.

Quest. 3. By what doth he redeem?

Ans. By his blood; by his life; by his power; by his nature sown in the vessel, and transforming the vessel into its own likeness. Yea, this is indeed redemption, when the creature is changed into, and brought forth in, the image, power, nature, virtue, and divine life of him that redeemeth; and the old contrary image perfectly blotted out, by the presence and indwelling of the new. This is perfect redemption, the least measure whereof is redemption in a degree.

And after this springs up the glory of the life in the vessel, even the glory which it had with the Father before the world was. In the nature of the life the glory is hid: it is sown in the seed, it dies with the seed, it is raised with the seed. When Zion in any heart is built up, it is natural to the Lord to appear there in his glory; and the pure eye sees it, and the pure heart enjoys and is one with it. So that as there is a true entrance into, fellowship in, and enjoyment of, the death of Christ; so is there also of the resurrection and glory of the redeemed life; which is the portion and inheritance which God hath prepared for Zion, after her long desolation and sore widowhood; which he will give unto her in the sight of all the world, whereby she shall become the beauty, joy, and praise of the whole earth; who hath hitherto been the reproached, despised, and afflicted, and made a prey of, by the several sorts of devouring spirits.

A Postscript to Professors.

This I am assured of, that it were an easy matter with the Lord, to give forth a literal description of all the things of his kingdom, so exact, full and natural to the thing, as might answer and satisfy every inquiring mind. But this would not effect the work which God is now about. This would not raise his seed, which would lie dead and buried under all this, unless quickened and raised by the immediate power and life of the Father. Nay, might not the earthly spirit be easily building with this an earthly fabric, which would not come within the measure of the true tem-

ple? May I speak freely; I would not deny any thing of God among you, nor be an instrument to quench the least good in any of you; but indeed I have seen, I have felt and known some of your snares; yet have rather spent the strength of my spirit in crying to God for you, that he would break them, and disentangle your souls, than in endeavours to demonstrate and manifest them unto you. And I am now touching at one of them, which is not the meanest; to wit, a getting the knowledge of things into the mind and comprehension, striving to grow rich there, and wise to understand and dispute about them. Indeed, this is not the poor one which receives the gospel, and is acquainted with the power and virtue of eternal life. And if the Lord did not teach my soul continually to give up the outward knowledge of every thing, and press after the inward life, I might soon grow wise after the flesh, but lose the fresh oil which suppleth and nourisheth me. My spirit boweth and presseth within me, in great earnestness to the God of mercies, that ye may not be left behind the flock, whose path is living, and who follow the living footsteps of the Lamb, who leadeth by his living Spirit from life to life into his kingdom.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

OF DEEP CONCERNMENT TO

THE JEWS,

FROM ONE WHO HATH BEEN A WRESTLER AND TRAVELLER WITH THE LORD OF LIFE, FOR THE DAY OF THEIR MERCY AND REDEMPTION.

Quest. 1. WHETHER the people of the Jews do err in their hearts from the God of their fathers (in this their sore dispersion and final captivity), and are not acquainted with his ways, wherein he would have them walk with him, and wait for his mercy and redemption.

Ans. That there is mercy towards, and redemption for, that poor, scattered, forsaken people, my heart hath from my childhood, and doth still steadfastly believe.

That there is a way wherein they are to worship the God of their fathers, and wait for his mercy and redemption, is also the belief of my heart.

But whether they do indeed know the Lord their God, and the present path wherein he requireth them to walk, and so are brought into the capacity and fitness for the mercy and redemption which is in the heart of the Lord towards them, that I very much doubt of, and in the tender love and good-will of my heart am drawn to propose the consideration thereof to them.

The grounds of this my doubt are chiefly these two:

1. Because their fathers, who had Moses and the prophets to instruct them in the law of the Lord, and in his ways of worship and obedience, yet did err in their hearts from the Lord their God, both under the teachings of Moses and of the prophets. "It is a people that do err in their heart,

and they have not known my ways," said the Lord concerning them, upon forty years trial of them in the wilderness. Psa. xcv. 10. And Moses also complained unto all Israel, that notwithstanding all that they had seen done by the Lord in the land of Egypt; and the great temptations, signs, and miracles in the wilderness, yet the Lord had not given them a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day. Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4. Neither did they more understand the mind of the Lord by the ministry of the prophets, than by Moses; but misunderstood his way of worship, misunderstood his intent about their sacrifices, and offered up the abomination of his soul; even when they offered up the very sacrifices which he required, as the Spirit of the Lord in the prophets often testified unto them. See Isa. i. Isa. lxvi. Mic. vi. Ezek. xx. with many more testimonies of the prophets, pleading with them from the mouth of the Lord.

Now if their fathers, in the days of Moses, and in the days of the prophets, when they had certain information from the mouth of the Lord concerning his ways, yet then did err in heart, and did not understand the mind of his Spirit; how much more probable is it that these, in the cloudy and dark day, when the light (that shone upon their fathers) is hid from their eyes, that these may miss of the mind of the Lord, and not understand the way of peace and acceptance with their God.

2. Because the prophets foretell of their idols cleaving to them, and their uncleanness not being removed, but their stubbornness and hardness remaining, until the great and terrible day of the Lord God Almighty, wherein his Spirit shall be poured down from on high, and they visited and redeemed in the light and power thereof. Then shall Ephraim say to his idols, "Get ye hence; what have I to do any more with idols?" Yea in that day "shall they cast their idols to the moles and to the bats." Isa. ii. 20. For the Lord will cleanse them from all their uncleanness, Ezek. xxxvi. 29. and take away the stone out of their heart, and make their spirits tender towards the God of their

fathers; insomuch as Ephraim shall smite upon his thigh, and bemoan his unaccostomedness to the yoke, and eternal law of the Spirit of his God, which he hath not understood in spirit, but been blinded about the ordinances of Moses, and testimonies of the prophets.

Quest. 2. Whether the Jews can possibly meet with the blessings of the Messiah, while their heart errs from the God of their fathers, and they do not know his way.

Ans. It is utterly impossible, while they miss of the path wherein blessedness is to be found, to meet with that blessedness which the path thereof alone leads to. How can the heart, in erring from God, meet with that which is alone to be found in union and walking with him? Have they met with it to this day? Or can they ever meet with it, till they be taught and led of the Lord to walk towards it? Oh that Israel knew the way of life! Oh that their hearts were turned towards their God, that they might no more die, nor be estranged from him like the heathen, but live the life of the blessed, and enjoy an inheritance in the land of the living!

Quest. 3. Is there any way for Israel to be cured of the error of their heart, that their misknowledge of God and his ways may be removed from them, and they may come to a right understanding, and a clearness of light?

Ans. There is balm in the land of the living, which is able to cure all the diseases and distempers of the dead, and there is a physician who is able to apply it. The God of Israel knoweth the very core of evil in the heart, and all the issues of death from thence, and how to take out the core, and stop all the issues of sin, death, and misery. The Shepherd of Israel understandeth the lost state, the wandering state, the sick state of every lost soul in Israel, and hath skill and remedies to recover and heal them all. Ezek. xxxiv.

Quest. 4. What way hath this skillful physician for the cure of the erring heart of his Israel, and to bring them to an acquaintance with him and his ways?

Ans. He hath divers, which are able thoroughly to effect it. As:

1. By circumcising their hearts, or by sprinkling clean water upon them to wash away the filth of their hearts. With him is "the fountain of living waters," and with them can he "wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion;" yea, "his fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem:" with him is "the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning," wherewith he can search out and judge all the evil in the hearts of his people Israel, and burn it up.

2. By creating a new heart and a new spirit within them. He can not only take away the heart of stone, but he can give a heart of flesh, which shall be sensible and tender to every motion and impression of his Spirit, as the other was dull and hard.

3. He can write his law in their heart, that they may no more read in the oldness of the letter, where life can never be learned (which is to pass away, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof), but in the newness of the Spirit, where the new eye easily reads and understands what God writes in the new heart and mind.

4. He can put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his ways, and to keep the statutes and judgments which God writes in this new book, even the renewed heart; for this is the book of the new covenant, these are the tables thereof, wherein God writes the law of life eternal for his Israel, wherein they are to read, and live for ever. And happy is that Israelite who waits for, and receives, the Spirit. To him none of the commandments of life are grievous, being all quickened to him in and by the Spirit. So that the more the Lord writes in his heart, the happier is he; he thereby receiving more of the life and power of God's Spirit, and learning thereby more of his God, and travelling there-through further with him into his purity and divine sweetness.

Quest. 5. What way is there for Israel to come by this cure?

Ans. None but God's covenant, the covenant which God

made with their fathers. Not the covenant of the law by Moses, but the covenant before the law, which was also renewed by Moses, but was not that covenant which God made with them in Horeb, but a covenant besides, as they may read, Deut. xxix. Alas, alas! man can never come to life by his obedience; he still falls short there; but by receiving the promised seed, he comes to be heir of the promise with the seed, and finds the obedience of the seed brought forth in him, through the grace and mercy of God, which breaketh forth upon his Israel. Oh that the hearts of Israel after the flesh were circumcised to hear this sound! that they might be turned in spirit towards the God of life and salvation, that from him they might receive the seed of life into their vessels, that their hearts might be purified and made living by the seed, and they might there meet with that, which their fathers could never meet with by the law of Moses; nor indeed is never so to be obtained, but by the promise to their fathers, which was before the law. And this must be the way of their restoration into favor with God; to wit, not the covenant which God made with their fathers, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, but the covenant by which God writes the law and knowledge of himself in the heart. Jer. xxxi. 32, 33.

Quest. 6. How may Israel come into this covenant with God? Or is there any thing for them to do, that they may enter into it, and reap the blessings of it?

Ans. They must mind the small beginnings of it, and subject to God therein, that they may know its further growth and progress in them. He that withstands the beginning of a thing can never come to the end thereof. Now the blessedness is chiefly in the end; but it is not found and enjoyed but by him that meets with the beginning, and so by degrees travels along till he comes to the end. And here is a great mystery, which the wisdom of man cannot learn or understand; in that, though the greatest blessings are contained in this covenant, yet the beginnings of it are the smallest and most contemptible. The seed of the prom-

ise, the seed of the kingdom, is the least of all seeds. Man easily overlooks it; or if he have a little glimmering of it, readily despises it, as unlikely ever to have that in it, or to bring that to pass for the soul, which it desires and expects. Yet there is no other way to the kingdom, but by this seed of the kingdom opening and growing in the heart, and gathering the heart into itself, leavening it (by its spreading) with the leaven of life eternal, and purging out the sour leaven of sin and death. This then is the path of life; thou must wait to feel the seed of the kingdom sown in thy heart by the good seeds-man, and then wait for thy gathering into it, and growth in it; and by thy subjection unto it, and its overspreading thee with the power of life eternal (which is in it, though hidden from thee), thou wilt find sin and death, and the power of hell, vanquished in thy heart, and thy heart fitted for the God of thy life to dwell and appear in, whose dwelling and appearance there will make thee completely happy. Only if thou wouldst come out of thy captivity by the enemy of thy soul (whereof thy present outward captivity is but a shadow), into the life and rest of thy God; take heed of despising the day of small things, or the low voice of thy God in thy heart; for therein are the beginnings of life. And thou must begin at the lowest step that the God of thy life chooseth for thee (and find that wisdom shut out, which would begin or go on otherwise than the Lord seeth fit to lead and teach) if ever thou enter into the path of life, or walk on therein with thy God.

Quest. 7. How may I know this seed of life, or feel when God begins to sow it in my heart, that I may not turn from the small beginnings thereof, but may find an entrance into this blessed covenant of God with my fathers before the law?

Ans. The word or voice of this seed is nigh thee, and it hath a living testimony with it for good, and against evil. It hath a living sparkling in the heart, whereby it is felt and known by those that wait for its appearance. It naturally turneth from the evil and towards the good; and in its moving and appearing in thee, it will be turning thee towards

that which it naturally loves, and from that which it naturally hates. In any such stirring in thy heart, there is the beginning of light eternal to shine upon thy tabernacle; and by giving up and being gathered into its warnings and motions, thou wilt feel a touch of life, even a quickening and warmth towards good, and a beginning of deadness and disunion with that which is evil. And as this is waited for more and more, it will appear more and more in the seasons it sees fit; and as it finds entrance into thee, so will it lead thee into its covenant with its God. Remember, therefore, what Moses said to thy fathers concerning the word of this covenant "It is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Deut. xxx. 14. Thy fathers never knew the virtue of this covenant, but were drowned in misery for want of minding it. And if thou wert gathered into it, thou wouldst meet with circumcision of heart, and the new creation of thy mind and spirit, and the writing of the eternal law of life there, and the putting of the Holy Spirit of God into thee; all which are contained in this covenant, yea, wrapped up in the very seed thereof, which is (in the Lord's times and seasons) smiting the seed of the evil-doer in the hearts of the sons of men, and striving to gather them out of the disobedient state and nature, into the obedience of the glimmerings of his light in their hearts; which becomes a law of life and power in them, as it finds entrance into, and place in, them. Therefore, O ye sons of Abraham after the flesh, wait for, know, and believe in the light of this covenant, and give up to be gathered into the holy seed thereof, that ye may become his children after the Spirit, in this new covenant, in this living covenant, wherein all that enter live in Spirit and power to the God of Abraham; and not by the works of the law of Moses, but by faith in the living seed, become heirs and inheritors of the promise of eternal life, which is to Abraham and his seed for ever.

O poor wandering Jew! wait to hear the cry of wisdom's voice in thy streets, discovering unto thee, and counselling thee against, the evil of thy heart and ways, by the Word

which is very nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. And be won upon by the voice of wisdom; give it thy heart, let its power enter into thee. Take up its cross, be willing to be bound by it from what thy heart would run after, and learn of it to draw in its yoke, that all may be yoked down and subdued in thee, which makes thee miserable, that thou mayest find a place and honor in wisdom's courts, and be adorned with her ornaments, and partake of her durable riches.

Watch unto that which reproves thee in thy heart, and watch unto its reproofs, that thou mayest be reformed by it, and transformed into its nature, and then thou wilt become a Jew indeed; even a Jew inward, born of the immortal seed of the divine wisdom.

And be not discouraged, either for want of light to distinguish between the good and the evil, or for want of power to turn from the one or to the other, O tender-hearted ones, who find a warmth and a willingness within to give up to the Lord: but wait his season, and hope in his tender bowels, in the midst of all the roarings and cruel usages of the enemy, who will be striving to the utmost to keep his hold of his captive, and to keep it back from travelling out of his dominions of death and darkness, towards the land of life, light, and peace eternal! I have had a very hard travel, and have felt his power and cruelty beyond measure, yet the Lord my God hath helped me, and my breathings abound toward the God of my life for his helping hand unto all that are in heart turned towards him, how difficult, intricate, and impossible soever the enemy strives to make the path of life unto them. Oh! remember the mercy of the Lord towards your fathers, who never felt the strength of the love of this covenant, which the Lord is now gathering his spiritual Israel into; how he pitied them, how he forgave them, how he visited them with loving-kindness and mercy time after time! What a stiff-necked people they were when he first chose them! how ready to run a whoring from him, and rebel afterwards! And surely much more is to be forgiven in this covenant, and much more is

the help and healing thereof; only let the heart be true to him, according to the virtue and power of this covenant; yea, and wait to receive that also of him; for it is the fruit and blessing of the covenant in which God healeth the backslidings of his Israel, and loveth them freely. Amen, amen; O Lord God of everlasting and most tender bowels of compassion, saith my soul!

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME

QUERIES

CONCERNING

THE ORDER AND GOVERNMENT

OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Query 1. WHETHER Christ, who is the head, Lord, King, &c. hath not appointed a spiritual order and government to be in his church and congregation.

Query 2. Whether a spiritual order and government is not useful, profitable, and necessary, for the well-being and right-managing of this spiritual body and holy society in the faith and life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In natural societies, natural government and order is profitable and necessary; and is not spiritual government as profitable and necessary in spiritual societies?

Query 3. Did not Christ give power of government to his apostles and ministers, at the first publication of his everlasting gospel? All power was given him in heaven and in earth; and did not he, who had all power given him, give power to his apostles and ministers, to preach his everlasting gospel to the world, to gather his sheep out of the

world, and to watch over them, oversee them, reprove, exhort, admonish, build up in the holy faith, and cut off and cast out that which was unholy, and would dispute against, but not submit unto, the Spirit, life, and power of truth?

Query 4. Did not Christ give them gifts also answerable; spirits of discerning, that they might be eyes to the body; and quick ears that they might hear for the body? For though the Lord hath given every one an eye and an ear, as to themselves; yet every one is not made by the Lord an eye or ear unto the body; but this is appointed for, and given to, those to whom the Lord pleases, who hath ordered all things wisely, carefully, and tenderly for the good of all.

Query 5. Were there not titles given them suitable to their offices and services in this kind, as pastors or shepherds after God's heart, according to the promise of the new covenant, overseers or bishops, such as watch for the soul; such as were not only to lay the foundation, but also carry on the building even to perfection, even till they were able to present the gathered and quickened souls a chaste virgin to Christ? and were they not to watch against, testify against, and in the power and authority of the Lord to strike at, all that was contrary, and would endeavor to interrupt, overturn, and destroy their work, which was of, in, and from, the Lord?

Query 6. Whether the body and common members of the churches were not to hearken to these ("He that knoweth God, heareth us." 1 John iv. 6.); to obey them in the Lord, to submit to this ministry, and their work in it, in the Lord; to receive the word of truth and holy exhortations and admonitions, milked out by these to them from the breast of life. And were not they that did hearken and obey commended? And were not the other that were not subjected, but slighted them, and their ministry and authority, testified against as disorderly and unruly?

Query 7. Were there not some relics of this order and government all along the apostasy, in the true church and ministry thereof? For there hath been a church and a min-

istry all along the apostasy, blessed be the name of the Lord; though not so visible and outwardly glorious, as many (who have erred from the Spirit and way of truth, and are out of the holy understanding) would make it. It is true, the church hath been as in a wilderness, desolate, as a woman forsaken, as a widow, bereft of her husband, stripped of her children, her visage marred, her witnesses mourning, nothing of her beauty, former estate, or glory, to be discerned or found out; yet all hath been preserved in the root, and there have been some shootings and sproutings of it forth, which have been inwardly felt by that which is of God in the heart, though not outwardly seen by man's eye. Thus the witnesses have had a ministry, have had the testimony of Jesus, even the Spirit of prophecy, all this dark night of apostasy, and in it have spoken mourningly to the world, and to the captivated souls, which that which was of God in his hath hearkened to; and there hath been a bowing and subjection of spirit in the Lord. Oh read this, and praise the name of the Lord, for his mercy to his in former generations, ye who are now gathered into his pure light and living power, from whom the night is past, and on whom the day, the everlasting day-spring from on high, is risen!

Query 8. After the apostasy, doth not God renew his commission, and send forth his angel (for they are all but one) to preach his everlasting gospel? And doth not he give them power to preach to the world, and to gather those, that hear the everlasting voice through them, into holy assemblies, separated in spirit, nature, and appearance from the world? And have they not authority and gifts, as well to build up as to plant? And ought not those that are gathered by them, as well to be subject to the light, Spirit, power, and authority of the Lord in them, as the former to the former ministers of the Lord? Oh that the world knew them! Oh that the world knew the appearance of God in them! Surely then they would bow to the word of truth, and the glorious appearance thereof; and happiness both inward and outward would break forth

upon the earth. There would be no misery, sorrow, nor distress in nations, if the dispensations of life from God had but their course in the earth; yea, nations and persons, that are now deadly sick, would soon be healed, did they but eat of the leaves of the tree of life, which are appointed by God for their healing, and can easily heal those wounds, and repair those breaches, which the wisdom or counsels of man cannot heal or repair. And oh, that they that are gathered might keep and be preserved in that sense and subjection, which they had and received from the Lord in the day of their convincement! Oh, how beautiful, how precious, how glorious was the ministry and ministers of God in their eye then! And to those that are still there, they are still precious; and to those that grow there, they are yet more precious. But those that enter into, or are ensnared in another thing, which leadeth from the true Spirit, lose the sight and sense which they then had, and instead thereof are filled with prejudices and wise reasonings, which to them may seem very strong and undeniable, though truth, and the true spiritual eye, sense, and understanding easily pierces through them, and preserveth those, who abide single in it, to the Lord.

Now against this holy order and government appointed by God, there may arise, in some hearts, some such objections as these following.

Obj. 1. But is not this a turning away from the measure of life in a man's own vessel, to another man's measure?

Ans. Waiting on God in his ordinances and appointments, and upon the ministry which he hath set up, the measure of life in him teacheth; and it is not a turning from the measure, but a subjecting to the Lord in the measure of his life, so to teach and do. The measure of his life taught me thus to do at first, and teacheth me to do so still; and will teach so still, all that hearken to it. It did not teach subjection in the apostles' days to the ministry then, and another thing now to the ministry now. But Christ is the same to-day as yesterday; his life the same, his Spirit the same, its doctrine and teaching the same: and that of God

in the conscience within answers the pure voice when it comes to the ear without. If life speak in one vessel, and its voice be not heard or owned by another vessel, the pure ear (in that other vessel) is not at that time open, but there is somewhat there that obstructs. And if the pure ear of the sheep be not open to hear the voice of the Shepherd, but it be accounted strange, it is much if the other ear in that vessel be not opened to hear the voice of the stranger, and to look upon it as the voice of the Shepherd, it agreeing with that, and answering to that, which now goeth for the voice of the measure of life in that heart. He that hath an ear, let him hear; for it is easy being taken in this snare, and the danger thereof is very great.

Obj. 2. Is not the least measure of life in any vessel (if subjected to, waited on, and believed in) sufficient to instruct and build up into a perfect man in God?

Ans. The sufficiency of the grace of God, turned to, and waited upon, there is nothing in my heart either to undervalue myself, or to teach others so to do. Nor when God did appoint a ministry to gather and build up his church, do I believe he did intend therein to undervalue the sufficiency of his grace: yea, I verily believe, that the grace of God, turned and hearkened to, and followed by, any soul in the darkest part of the earth, hath sufficiency in it to save, and will save that soul, though there be none outwardly to minister to it, or help it. Yet this I also believe, that as there is a sufficiency in every measure of life to the work God hath appointed for that measure; so there is a greater sufficiency in the growth and fuller proportion of life; and the lesser, the weaker, the poor, the afflicted, the babes, are to be helped by the stronger, especially in their darknesses, afflictions, temptations, &c. And so the greater and stronger in the life, Spirit, and power of the Lord, is a strength and blessing to the weaker; which the weaker making use of in the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord (in the sense and benefit of the sweet help and relief which often the Lord pleaseth to give forth thereby), will find just

cause, and be often drawn, to bless the name of the Lord for.

The measure of life in the vessel teacheth to subject to the Spirit of the Lord, and his life in others; which the measure of life in any never refuseth, but still knoweth (when awake and living in the vessel) its own, and hath, at least, a secret sense of it, and unity with it. But that which pretends to set up the measure of life as a teacher, otherwise than God hath appointed, and in opposition to the teaching and ministry which he hath appointed, and to his gift in those vessels, which is as well for the building up and perfecting of the body, as for the gathering; that is another thing in that vessel that doth so, than the measure of life; another spirit, another nature, another ear, than that that first heard. And though it seem to cry up the sufficiency of the measure of life, and to plead for that (and perhaps the creature thinks it is really so); yet this is not the intent of the spirit in the vessel, but to cry up itself, and to make its voice go for the voice of the measure of life: and so such err from the faith, the truth, the Spirit, the measure of life, and are in the nature, spirit, and measure of another thing; which is indeed death, though they see it not, but look upon themselves as gloriously living, and abiding in the pure doctrine and principle above others.

Now to help these a little out of the snares and deep entanglements of the enemy, if the Lord please, I would earnestly press the consideration of this upon them. Did not the apostles preach up the measure of life, the grace of God in their day, Christ within, the word of faith nigh in the mouth and heart, the anointing within, its sufficiency to teach all things, &c. And yet did they so preach it as to overthrow the ministry, or the gifts or service either towards them that were without, or them that were within? Had they not power over them in the Lord? Were they not to teach them, to instruct them, to build them up in the holy faith, and also to watch against wolves and devouring spirits, which would strive to enter the flock in sheep's

clothing, and, as preachers of righteousness, to make a prey of the innocent life in the upright-hearted, if possible?

Obj. 3. But those who have ministered from the Lord, and whose ministry I have felt and owned, and in the distress and affliction of my soul have had recourse to, hoping that they might have a sense of my condition, and give me proper advice; yet they, instead thereof, have turned me to his witness that wounded me, counselling me to wait on the Lord there, and have they not also told us, that if they themselves should turn from the things they have declared, this truth would abide for ever; to wit, that man is to keep to the measure of life in his particular?

Ans. It is true; a man is to keep to the measure of life in his own particular. They taught this then; they teach it now. We practised it then; we are to practise it now. In this measure of life we received them then; and in this measure of life (if we abide still in it) we shall receive them now, and feel their growth in the ability, gift, and power of the Lord.

And when any come to them for advice, they are to wait on the Lord, to feel in him their state who come, and to give forth what the Lord gives them; whether words from the Lord to the party concerning his state, or directions to retire in, and wait for, his more immediate appearance in their own measures. For when we feel the presence and mighty power of God in them, we are too apt to look at them, and then a word may come (proper to our estates) to recall us to retire to our measure. And when we feel immediate relief from the Lord, and his appearing to us in our retiredness in our own spirits, then we may be apt to despise the gifts and service of others; and then another *word* may come from them, proper to our state then, to warn us not to despise prophesying, or the gifts, power, and authority of life in others. Now both these are proper, useful, and weighty in their seasons, when given forth by the Spirit of the Lord. Nor are they contradictory one to the other, but subservient in their seasons and places, which that which is of God feels; but that which is erred from

God, and joined to another (under a false representation and belief of things) feels not, but finds a seeming difference, and sets them at variance one with another, as if they could not stand together. And this is the false nature, the false spirit, the false appearance of life, which appears as if it were the measure of the pure, true life, but is not. This is the false woman, the false wisdom, whose heart is as snares and nets, and her hands bands. Whoso pleaseth God (abiding in the measure of his truth) shall escape her; but the sinner (that departs therefrom) shall be taken by her. Therefore fear the Lord, come to that which first convinced; to the first truth, to the first sense, to the first love, &c., and all these imaginations of the mind, and subtle devices of the enemy, will fly away, and thy poor entangled soul be delivered, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.

If the enemy should directly cry out against God, or his Christ, or his grace, or the measure of his truth, he would easily be espied and turned from. Therefore he teacheth to cry up these in a wrong spirit and judgment, and after a wrong manner, to undermine, betray, and lead the heart from that secretly, which openly it would never hear any thing against. Now those that are thus deceived, are exceedingly to be pitied, and their deliverance from their entanglements and captivities to be breathed after, and waited for. For I may say, in truth and upright sense of heart, there are many that look towards Zion, who yet are ignorant of the devices and sleights of Satan, to entangle them in their way; and some are caught in his snares (like foolish birds catching at the chaff, which makes the bigger show, instead of the wheat), losing the substance for a shadow; the life and power in the heart, for a notion and conceit in the brain. And these are wise in their own eyes, so that indeed it is very hard to reach or recover them; yea, much harder than it was at first, because they are become more rooted and settled in the wrong ground (yea, in a worse earth) than they were when they were first reached to by the power of truth. Yet over these there is a deep lamentation, and for these a sore travel, which the Lord

God bless and prosper, for their recovery unto that from which, through mistake, they have erred.

Obj. 4. If any man hath received a gift of ministry, he hath received it of the Lord; and its end being to gather to the Lord, they that by it are gathered, are to be delivered up to the Lord, that he (as king, priest, and prophet) may govern, &c.

Ans. The end of the ministry is not only to gather, but also to preserve and build up what is gathered, even to perfection. And the soul being (especially at first, if not for a long time) weak and babish, not so fully acquainted with the measure of life (having had but some touches and demonstrations of it, but not being gathered fully into it, nor rooted and settled in it); I say, the soul in this state, hath as much need of the ministry to preserve, direct, and watch over it in the truth, as to gather it out of the world. Therefore the Father, in his tender mercy and love, hath appointed those who are grown in his life (and in the power and authority of his Spirit) to oversee, watch over, instruct, and take care of the flock, so as they may give to him an account of their souls; and in their care, diligence, and faithfulness, they are owned and blessed of the Lord; and the other in their holy fear, reverence, and subjection. Now this is right order from God, wherein the safety of the flock consists; but out of this is danger and confusion, which the measure of life teacheth to avoid.

Obj. 5. But in a case of doubt or difference, which shall be the judge; the measure of life within, or the testimony of others without? Shall I judge as I feel the thing in the measure of my own life? Or shall I submit to others against my own sense and judgment, because I have an esteem of them, as being much above me in the growth, sense, and understanding of truth?

Ans. It is a great matter to judge aright, and to discern and know the measure of truth (the voice, motion, and judgment thereof) from all the enemy's false appearances, and from all the deceits of the heart. This is most certain; Jerusalem (the heavenly building, the church of the first-

born) is at unity with itself. Truth is pure, eternal, unchangeable, always the same; the same in every member, in every vessel, throughout the whole body.

And this I may say concerning its appearance in this our age, Was ever the like unity known and brought forth since the days of the apostles? How hath the Spirit been One, the demonstration and testimony of truth One, the doctrine One, the conversation and practices One in us all! Why, or how so? Because we have had our begetting, birth, and teaching from the same life, the same Spirit; the same fountain springing up, and opening in us all, that have been gathered into its nature and power. Now from this fountain, from this spring of life, never issueth any thing that is contrary to the life in any. Therefore if there appear a contrariety, there must be a waiting to feel who is erred from, or at least not yet fully gathered into, the measure of life. And such as are of an inferior stature and growth in the body, are (in an especial manner) to watch and wait in sobriety and fear, till the Lord clear up, and make things manifest; and likewise in the mean time to take heed of a hasty concluding, according to what riseth up in the understanding or judgment (though with ever so great a seeming clearness and satisfaction) as if it must needs be of and from the life in the vessel.

It is not an easy matter, in all cases, clearly and understandingly to discern the voice of the Shepherd, the motions of God's Spirit, and certainly to distinguish the measure of life from all other voices, motions, and appearances whatsoever. Through much growth in the truth, through much waiting on the Lord, through much fear and trembling, through much sobriety and meekness, through much exercise of the senses, this is at length given and obtained. And yet there is a preservation in the mean time to that which is lowly and submissive, looking up to the Lord continually, and not trusting to its own understanding, sense, and judgment. But that which is hasty and confident, and so ready to plead for its own sense and judgment, according to the measure of life, as it calls it; that is commonly

out, entered into the erring spirit, pleading and contending for it knows not what, and is very apt to judge and condemn others in that very respect, wherein itself is most justly and righteously judged and condemned by the Lord, even by his pure life and Spirit in his people.

This then is in my heart to say in short to this objection: Let the measure of life judge freely in thee at any time concerning any thing, and that judgment will stand for ever. But be thou wary, wait on the Lord, that thou mayest be sure thou dost not mistake in thy own particular, calling that life which the Lord and his people know to be otherwise. For if so, thou departest from the unity and bond of the Spirit, and from the true sense and judgment, and givest deceit an advantage over thee, even to lay a foundation of destroying thee. Likewise those who are to watch over thee in the Lord (to lay this truth before thee, to exhort and reprove thee, as occasion is) that they may give an account of thy soul to him, cannot do it with joy and rejoicing in his presence, but with grief and lamentation of heart; which is not at all profitable, but very unprofitable for thee.

Now for a close: there are some considerations springing up in my heart concerning unity, which I find drawings here to annex, in true love and tenderness, for the use and service of others; which are as follow:

1. Unity in the spiritual body, which is gathered into and knit together in the pure life, is a most natural and comely thing. Yea, it is exceeding lovely to find all that are of the Lord of one heart, of one mind, of one judgment, in one way of practice and order in all things.

2. The Lord is to be waited upon for the bringing forth of this in the body; that as there is a foundation of it laid in all (the life and spring being over all), so all may be brought by him into the true and full oneness.

3. The Lord is to be acknowledged and praised in the bringing of it forth (so far as it is brought forth), and to be waited upon for the further perfecting of it.

4. A watch is to be kept (throughout the whole body, and in every heart) for the preserving of it, so far as it is

brought forth, that the enemy, by no device or subtlety, cause disunion or difference in any respect, wherein there was once a true unity and oneness. For the enemy will watch to divide; and if he be not watched against, in that which is able to discover and keep him out, by some device or other he will take his advantage to make a rent (in those that are not watchful), from the pure truth and unity of life in the body. For he that in the least thing rents from the body (in any respect or particular which was brought forth by the life), he in that respect hearkens to another spirit, even the dividing spirit, and by its instigation rents from the life itself, and so doth not keep his habitation, nor his unity, with that which abides in its habitation.

Now it is also in my heart, for the perfecting of this close, to mention a few things (in the same love and tenderness) which I have found helpful to me towards the preserving of me in unity with the body. Perhaps it may please the Lord to refresh some others by the mention of them, and to make them useful and helpful to them also.

1. The first is, *the pure fear of the Lord.* This poiseth and guardeth the mind, keeping down fleshly confidence and conceitedness (which is very apt to spring up), making it wary and considerate either of what it receives or rejects; of what it practiseth, or forbeareth practising; causing it to wait much, try much, and consult much with the Lord, and with his ministers and people, and preserves out of that suddenness and inconsiderateness of spirit, at which the enemy often enters. For truth is weighty, and will bear trial, and the more it is tried in the balance, the more manifest its nature and ways appear: but the enemy's appearances and likenesses are not so; but their deceit, by a thorough trial, comes to be made manifest.

2. The second is, *humility of heart.* This is very precious, and of a preserving nature. Yea, in this state the Lord helpeth and teacheth; and the soul also (in this state) is fit to receive the help and teachings of the Lord. That which is lifted up and conceited (ready to justify its own way, and condemn even the whole body) is neither fit to be taught

by the Lord, nor doth the Lord delight (but rather disdain) to teach it. And so not being taught by him, it must needs be liable to err; yea, to hearken to that spirit, whose voice is more pleasing and suitable to the erring mind than the Lord's voice is.

3. A third great help, which in the tender mercy of the Lord I have had experience of, is *sobriety of judgment.* Not to value or set up mine own judgment, or that which I account the judgment of life in me, above the judgment of others, or that which is indeed life in others. For the Lord hath appeared to others, as well as to me: yea, there are others who are in the growth of his truth, and in the purity and dominion of his life, far beyond me. Now for me to set up, or hold forth, a sense or judgment of a thing in opposition to them, this is out of the sobriety which is of the truth. Therefore, in such cases, I am to retire, and fear before the Lord, and wait upon him for a clear discerning and sense of his truth, in the unity and demonstration of his Spirit with others, who are of him, and see him. And this will prevent the rents which the want of this sobriety may occasion.

4. The last thing which I have now to mention is, *tenderness, meekness, coolness, and stillness of spirit.* I wrap up these together, because they are much of a nature, and go much together. These are of a uniting, preserving nature. He that differs and divides from the body cannot be thus; and he that is thus cannot rend or divide. This is the pure, heavenly wisdom, which is peaceable and keepeth the peace; but the other wisdom is rough, stiff, hard, clamorous, ready to take offence, ready to give offence; exceeding deep in the justification of itself, exceeding deep in the condemnation of others; and dares (in this temper) appeal to the Lord, as if it were right in its ways, but wronged by others; as if it did abide in the measure of his truth and life, which others have departed from. And how can it be otherwise? How can the wrong eye, the wrong spirit, the wrong wisdom, but judge wrong, justifying the wrong practices, and condemning the right?

But such shall find (if they come to the true touchstone, even the measure of life indeed) that they are not in the true tenderness, which proceeds from the life, in the true meekness and gentleness, in the true coolness and stillness; but rather in the reasonings, noises, clamors, and disturbances, which arise from another spirit, mind, and nature than that which is of the truth. And in coming back from this wisdom to the *pure wisdom*, from the pretended measure of life to the *true measure*, and becoming tender, meek, cool, and still in it, they shall there feel their error from the Spirit and power of the Lord, and therein own their condemnation therefore from him; and also justify them who have abode in the power, and been guided by the Spirit and pure measure of life, which is from God, and in God, while they have departed from it. For though the spirit of error (wherewith they have been deceived and entangled) hath made them believe that they have faithfully abode in the principle and doctrine of truth, while others have departed; yet that will soon vanish, as truth comes again to be felt, and heard speak in them, and the measure of life to live again in them, and to redeem them afresh into its holy nature, and pure, living sense. And blessed is he who is not deceived about truth; but is of the *pure nature*, and in the *pure power* of it; in whom the *true eye* sees, the *true ear* hears, the *true heart* understands; who is of a *right spirit*, and walketh *uprightly* before the Lord, and among his people. The blessing of the seed, the peace, comfort, and joy which is from the Most High, shall descend upon him, fill his vessel, and continue with him, to the satisfying of his heart, and the overflowing of his cup, in the midst of his brethren, and in the very sight of his enemies. The Lord God, of his tender mercy, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, watch over, preserve, and mightily defend all his from all devouring spirits, and inward devices and deceits of the enemy; carrying on and perfecting the work of his goodness, love, and mercy in them, to his own glorious, eternal, everlasting praise. Amen.

Written by Isaac Penington, in Aylesbury prison.

SOME

DEEP CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING

THE STATE OF ISRAEL,

PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME.

WITH

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CONCERNING

UNITY.

MANY deep considerations have been upon my heart concerning the state of Israel, both past, present, and to come; some of which I find drawings to communicate; together with some QUESTIONS and ANSWERS concerning UNITY. The Considerations concerning Israel are these which follow:—

The precious living state which my soul remembereth to have been about the beginning of the late troubles of this nation, when Israel was bent to seek after the Lord, and applied their hearts to wait upon him in fastings, and earnest supplications, wherein my heart hath often had the testimony that they were accepted of him, and had many times the seal of his presence and power among them: yea, my heart did truly unite with and enjoy the Lord in what was then given forth, and I can never be drawn to deny the truth and worth of that dispensation; though I know it was swallowed up by a greater desolation soon following after, and since by the breaking forth of a more lively dispensation.

2. The over-running of that state by the subtlety of the enemy, drawing the minds of the simple and upright-hearted from the living feeling, and from the inward power of religion, into the disputations and contentions about forms of worship and church-government, which drew out the reasoning part, and withdrew the spirit of the mind from feeding on its proper nourishment; and so life decayed in the spirit, while wisdom, and knowledge, and subtlety increased in the understanding. And so the upright-hearted, missing of life where before they had found it, were scattered up and down to seek after it; and those who abode where they were, grew dry, barren, and contentious; losing the savor, sweetness, meekness, love, and indeed whatever was living and precious, and remained fixing their minds on that which the Lord had departed from. Oh, the darkness and misery of this state! Oh, the pain of the hearts where life was stirring, for want of the living God! Oh, the death and formality of those that were dead and formal! Surely, had not the Lord pitied his people in this state, and appeared to them in his life and power (which this great desolation made way for), it had been determined concerning Israel for ever: for death had overgrown the generality, and life was even gasping and expiring in the single-hearted.

3. The precious breaking forth of the Lord (at this dismal time, in this hour of distress and desperate condition of Israel) in some hidden vessels, whom he had kept waiting upon him, and whom he had preserved fresh in the sense of him; to whom his appearance was very glorious, to whom he opened the state of the earth, and the state of his people, giving them the everlasting gospel to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, and promising them that his Spirit and power should go along with them, bidding them go forth to till and dress the earth, and to gather his people into his fold. And who can utter what the glory of this light was, in its shining and breaking forth in their hearts! How welcome to their weary souls, how pleasant to the eye of their spirits, how demonstrative and satisfactory to their hearts! Oh! the joy of that day (surely it can never be for-

gotten by them) wherein they sensibly felt the pouring down of the Spirit of life upon them, and their hearts gathered into the bosom of eternal rest, and their souls and bodies sanctified, and set apart for the Lord and his service.

4. The contemptible means God put into their hands to work this work by; which was not by preaching any new thing, but by directing to a principle which God had already hid in the earth of every man's heart, and which was to be known by its divine nature and light, turning against and reproving sin; testifying that this was the way the Lord of heaven and earth had chosen, to bring his sons and daughters into the power and glory of his life. Oh! what heart can receive this, what eye can see any beauty in this, but that which the Lord toucheth and openeth! I testify, in the sense of life, that the wisdom of man, yea, the wisdom of Israel corrupted, cannot but despise and turn from this. Is not this the lowest of all dispensations? Is not this common to all mankind? Doth not this fall short (in itself, as I may say, and as it hath formerly been dispensed) of the dispensation of the law of Moses to the Jews, much more of the dispensation by Christ and his apostles? Who would have looked for the Lord here! And yet this hath the Lord chosen to gather his people by, and to appear to the world in; and hath gathered the life, virtue, and substance of all former dispensations into it, as those who are gathered thereby, and have waited upon him therein, and felt the nature and power of his life, (and seen things past, present, and to come) are living witnesses of, against all the gainsayings, thoughts, and reasonings of flesh and blood.

5. The contemptibleness of the vessels, which the Lord chose to fill with this treasure, and to let forth this dispensation of his life through. They were for the most part mean, as to the outward; young country lads, of no deep understanding, or ready expression, but very fit to be despised everywhere by the wisdom of man, and only to be owned in the power of that life wherein they came forth. How ridiculous was their manner of coming forth and appearance to the eye of man! About what poor, trivial cir-

cumstances, habits, gestures, and things, did they seem to lay great weight, and make great matters of moment! How far did they seem from being acquainted with the mysteries and depths of religion! But their chief preaching was *repentance, and about a light within, and of turning to that, and proclaiming the great and terrible day of the Lord to be at hand:* wherein I confess my heart exceedingly despised them, and cannot wonder that any wise man, or sort of professors, did, or do yet, despise them. Yea, they themselves were very sensible of their own weakness, and unfitness for that great work and service wherewith the Lord had honored them, and of their inability to reason with man; and so (in the fear and in the watch of their spirits) kept close to their testimony, and to the movings of his power, not mattering to answer or satisfy the reasoning part of man, but singly minding the reaching to, and raising of, that to which their testimony was.

6. The blessing that God gave to this his dispensation of life in their hands. Oh, how did the Lord prosper them in gathering his scattered, wandering sheep into his fold of rest! How did their words drop down like dew, and refresh the hungry, thirsty souls! How did they reach to the life in those to whom they ministered, raising up that which lay dead in the grave, to give a living testimony to the living voice of God in them! How did they batter the wisdom and reasonings of man, making the loftiness thereof stoop and bow to the weak and foolish babe of the begettings of life! Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what the power of life hath wrought, through them, in the hearts and consciences of those, who have longed after, and waited for, the Lord. Oh! the breathings and meltings of soul, the sense of the living presence of God, the subjecting of the heart unto the Lord, the awakening of and giving strength unto his witness, the falling down and weakening of the powers of darkness, the clear shining of the light of life in the heart, and the sweet running of the pure streams thereof into the enlivened souls, which hath often been known and sealed

to from the powerful appearance of God in their ministry! Indeed when I have considered these and such like things in my heart, and narrowly marked them in my converse with them, I have been often forced to cry out concerning them, *Truly here is man very weak and contemptible; but God very glorious and powerful.* And indeed, when at any time I looked on the man, I was hardly able to forbear disdaining them; but, on the other hand, when the eye of my spirit beheld the power and glory of the Lord in them, I could hardly forbear overesteeming and exalting them.

7. The glory which the Lord advanced these vessels to, since his beginning to make use of them. How hath he enriched them with gifts and abilities, and every way fitted them for the service and employment he hath had for them! How hath he enlarged their ministry, that they who had very little to say, either by way of declaration or disputation at first, now abound with strength, and abundantly surpass the knowledge and wisdom both of the world, and of other professors of religion! The Lord indeed hath adorned them, putting his beauty upon them, and causing them to grow up in his strength, and in his wisdom. This mine eye hath seen, and often taken notice of, blessing the name of the Lord, and praying to him for their preservation. And surely whoever he be, that hath either known himself, or heard the relation of the poverty of these young striplings, when they first came forth in the power of the Lord, how empty in themselves they then were, how sensibly they went up and down of their own weakness, how little they had to say to people that came to observe them and inquire of them, how afraid they were to be drawn from their watch, at what a distance they stood from entering into reasoning about things,—I say, he that did know, and doth consider this, and shall also behold how the Lord hath advanced them since, making them mighty and honorable with his gifts and abilities (with the beauty whereof the very man flourisheth to the sight of every eye that is in any measure truly open), cannot but acknowledge the change to be wonderful.

8. I have had the sense and consideration of this also in my heart, that their danger is now greater than when they were poorer, weaker, and not so enriched and gifted by the Lord. The enemy is very subtle and watchful, and there is danger to Israel all along, both in the poverty and in the riches; but the greater danger is in the riches: because then man is apt to forget God, and to lose somewhat of the sense of his dependence (which keeps the soul low and safe in the life), and also to suffer somewhat of exaltation to creep upon him, which presently in a degree corrupts and betrays him. *The heart that is in any measure lifted up in itself, so far it is not upright in the Lord.* Let every one feel this, waiting to be preserved, and praying for those who are most beautified by gifts and abilities from the life, because in this respect (and at this time) their danger is greatest. When Israel is poor, low, weak, trembling, seeing no loveliness nor worthiness in himself, but depending upon the mere mercy and tender bowels of the Lord in the free covenant of his love, &c., then is Israel safe. But when he hath a being given him in the life, and is richly adorned with the ornaments of life, and comes to have the power itself in his hand to make use of, then is he in more danger of being somewhat of himself, and of forgetting him that formed him, (being apt to make use of his gifts without such an immediate sense of the giver as he had in his trembling and weak estate) and so of departing out of that humble, tender, abased, contrite state, and temper of spirit, wherein he was still preserved.

9. This also hath been manifest to me, and deeply impressed on my spirit all along, that the Lord may, if he see good, suffer some great and eminent ones to fall in Israel. Man may forget himself, and the Lord may let out temptation upon him, and suffer it to enter, that he may bring him to the sense and feeling of his weakness again. Yea, those who have felt the power of the Lord in and through an instrument, may give more to the instrument than belongs unto it, and so put the Lord upon recovering the honor due to him, which is misplaced and misapplied to that which is

but his instrument. This is the Lord's day (the light thereof is his, the life his, the power his), and the glory thereof will he not give to another. If therefore any man, in this day, shall take to himself what belongs to the Lord, or any other shall give it him, the Lord will not so lose it, but will find out a way to recover his own. And happy is the man who lieth continually perfectly abased before the Lord, assuming nothing of the Lord's to himself, nor attributing any thing of the Lord's to another, that the Lord alone may be exalted everywhere. And let all gifts serve the seed, and its rising over all gifts be waited for, that the life everywhere may have its due, being lifted up over all.

10. I have had a deep sense of this also, that if the Lord should suffer such a thing to fall out among us, it may cause a great shaking and scattering in Israel. Surely I may say, it would come very unexpectedly and unsuspectedly to many; and so such persons would be surprised with it, and not at all prepared for it. Alas! who could suspect (feeling persons so eminent in the power, and so exercised and skillful in the way and paths of righteousness, and so able to instruct others therein) that they could possibly fall in any degree from the truth and power of life! And yet they are not free from temptation: and if they be confident of their own strength, and forget the tender hand of the Lord, he may suffer a temptation to enter them, which presently begets a ground for evil weeds to spring up in, and for blindness, and hardness, and error from the pure power, to creep in at.

O dear friends! who know the preciousness of life, and desire the preservation of the Lord in your several conditions, let us fear the Lord, and his goodness to us, remembering what a low ebb we were at when the Lord visited us, and how freely he visited, and how freely he daily preserveth, that we may not be hardened or lifted up against the world, or against any sort of professors; but may magnify the grace which hath made and keepeth up the difference between us and them, praying to the Lord for them, and watching for the hour of his mercy to them, exercising all

manner of sweetness, and meekness, and long-suffering towards them in the mean time: also pitying and bearing with all the tempted ones among ourselves, as such who are sensible that we also may be tempted, and that understand the ground why we fall not by the temptation.

What shall I say more? There are three QUERIES appearing in my view, in relation to this thing, which the hearts of some may desire satisfaction about; to which I find somewhat, in way of answer, springing up in me.

Query 1. How may a man, whom the Lord hath exalted by gifts and services to him, be preserved from falling?

Ans. 1. There is that which waiteth to preserve, and is still stretching forth its hand, to keep to itself that which it hath gathered; which being hearkened and yielded unto in its discoveries, and warnings, will not fail to deliver the soul from the danger and snares of every condition.

2. There is the free mercy and love of the covenant, wherein the soul may find help and pity, although it should be somewhat tainted and entangled with the snares of the enemy.

3. There is a proper frame or state of spirit; to wit, of humility and brokenness, which is fit for Israel in every condition; but more especially when he is exalted in the dominion and power of life, and honored with great gifts and services for the Lord. In this Israel is safe: and happy is he who is not suffered to abide in any degree of exaltation of spirit; but is brought down again (through the tender mercy and love of the Lord) into this, though by the buffetings of Satan.

Query 2. How may the little ones, if the Lord should suffer one or more (of such as have been very eminent in his service) to decline and fall, how may they be preserved from falling with him or them?

Ans. Keeping to the measure of life in the particular, and not valuing others by an apprehension concerning them; but only knowing and honoring them as they are felt and discerned in the life; this will preserve every particular (that is thus ordered) from being tainted with any

of their snares or deviations. *O Israel! O little babes? know no man after the flesh; but the Lord alone in his living Spirit.* For man is but a vessel, wherein the life may appear or disappear at pleasure; and the Lord is not engaged to make use of man in his service, further than he seeth good. The Lord may appear where he hath never appeared before, and he may not appear where he hath hitherto appeared very frequently and powerfully. Oh! know the life in thine own heart, that is to be the judge in thee concerning the appearances of life in others. If that judge not, be still and silent in thy heart, waiting for its judgment: when that judgeth, let all thy thoughts and reasonings be bowed down under it. Let man have no more than his due, while the Lord pleaseth to make use of him; and to such there will accrue no great shaking or damage, when the Lord layeth aside any of his own instruments. But if any thing but the life judge, it will still either be setting up, or throwing down, man: whereby there will come loss on either hand in the issue, to all such who thus act.

Query 3. How may any such, as have fallen from a high and glorious state in the power and dominion of life, be again recovered?

Ans. Indeed this is a very difficult thing: not because the mercy and power of the Lord is at a loss to or concerning man in this state; but because this condition sets a man's spirit at so great a distance from the use of that remedy which the Lord hath appointed for man's recovery. It is very hard to bring such an one to the sense of his loss (whereby the depth of his fall might be prevented) until he be gone very far; and the further he goes in his declining from the life, the harder will his recovery be. Again: it is hard for such an one to become so poor, and lie so low and so long at the foot of God's grace, as also to be contented to be so laid aside and not made use of, as the Spirit of the Lord may judge necessary for him, to bring him into a perfect abasement of spirit, and to work that perfectly out of him whereby the enemy now entered to betray him: yea, the judgment of the Lord (the righteous and severe

judgment of the Lord) is hard to be borne in this state; and it is much if such a vessel do not break here, in its new forming on the wheel. Yet that which boweth before the Lord, being willing to be smitten and abased by him, and to lie under his correction and judgment his season, even until he say it is enough, the Lord will without doubt restore into his favor, if not also into the honor of his service again.

Obj. But some tender heart may say (which feeleth many weaknesses, much unbelief, and the danger of falling daily), If this be true, oh, what will become of me! If such as these be liable to fall, and to fall so dangerously, how shall I stand! I was wounded enough before with the sense of my own condition; but this affrighteth me much more.

Ans. O tender heart! the enemy may make use of this to trouble and afflict thee; but it was not so intended by the Lord, who is very full of unutterable bowels, and who hath a day of bowels for thy state: yea, his day, which hath already dawned, is so dawning as to reach thee. The Lord hath not yet done gathering his scattered sheep, nor yet shown the utmost skill he hath, either to gather, or to preserve; and the state of the weakest, under the preserving power of the Lord, is safe. Great are the diseases of Israel; great is yet the loss of scattered souls, which as yet know not the call of the Shepherd; and if at any time they do feel a touch thereof, are easily reasoned again out of it, and driven back by the thoughts of their own hearts. Oh! great, great also is the skill of the Shepherd, and his hand very tender, which the Lord is putting forth for the help of these; blessed be his name. And as the condition of these needs and requires that from the nature and soul of the Lord, which the conditions of others do not require; so the nature of the Lord hath mercy and love in it to answer their states, and will give it out in his day and season. Oh! let none be offended thereat. Let no eye throughout all Israel be evil, because the Lord is exceeding good. If he please to kill the fatted calf, and set it before his prodigal son, let none that have walked faithfully with him in any dispensa-

tion be offended thereat: but rather let all (in whom is life) stand ready to shout at the issuings forth of love and mercy, in the varieties of the dispensations thereof, according to the need and capacity of every sort of vessels, prepared by the Lord to receive it. Therefore, *O thou afflicted! tossed with tempests, and not comforted;* thou shalt know and feel this from the Lord, that he knoweth how to bring home his consolations to thy soul, and to cast thee into the mould of his life, and bring thee forth in the power of his righteousness; and that he needeth not to find any worthiness or righteousness in thee; for he can create and make room for it in thy heart; yea, he can begin, carry on, and perfect his work in thee, for his own name's sake. And to thee, O broken soul! I cannot so much say, do this, or believe this; but rather, the Lord will work in thee; yea, the Lord will quicken faith in thee, and raise up his own nature from the seed of his own life, which he himself hath sown in thy inward parts, and will not fail to preserve.

Besides, this broken state of thine (wherein the vileness and weakness of self is daily felt, with the exceeding great need of the Lord's preserving power and mercy) is a safe state; towards which, that which (alone) preserveth, is continually issuing forth in the bowels of his tenderness. And though thou dost not see the love of the Lord, and his tender care over thee (and so wantest the comfort of thine own condition); yet it is never a whit the less in the heart and Spirit of the Lord towards thee; and in divers respects I may say, it is better for thee at present to want the sight of it. I am satisfied in my heart concerning the nature and ways of the Lord, and I know there is that mercy in him which my soul crieth for; and that it is not only treasured up, but about to be issued forth towards those for whose sakes the cry is unto him for it. The Lord will arise, and have mercy upon Zion, even upon the mourners and distressed ones in Zion; he will say to them who are of a fearful heart, and mourn bitterly because of their unbelief (finding themselves as unable to believe now for righteousness, as ever the Jews were to work for it); be strong; stand still;

wait on me your God; behold, my righteousness is ready to be revealed, and I am bringing that faith with me which ye want, to give your souls the entrance into my promises, and into my divine nature promised. Ye are my lambs, and my bosom is for you, and thither will I gather you; yea, ye have already conceived, and are with young, though ye know it not; and I will lead you on gently in a way that ye cannot, nor never shall, know, as ye would know it; but shall not want or miss of that knowledge thereof, that I see good for you. I will beget a deeper life in you, and bring it forth after a deeper way of dispensation than ye have yet been acquainted with, or than your understandings can comprehend; but in the death which I am bringing upon you, and in the travailing pangs which ye shall feel in your hearts, shall it spring up in you and be brought forth. O dear lambs! mind the quickenings of life, and the savor and sense which the Lord begets in the heart, and let the outward knowledge (even of what ye have had experience) go, but as the Lord quickens it; and mind not the noises of thoughts and reasonings about things, which the soul's enemy will be striving to fill you with, and batter you by; but sink down from these, and wait to feel that which lies beneath them; in the free nature, life, virtue, power, and motions whereof alone is your soul's salvation; and if ye cannot receive the sense of this direction at present, wait on the Lord either for it, or for what other manifestation or tender help he shall please to give forth unto you.

SOME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CONCERNING

SPIRITUAL UNITY.

Quest 1. WHAT is spiritual unity?

Ans. The meeting of the same spiritual nature in divers, in one and the same spiritual centre or streams of life. When the spirits or souls of creatures are begotten by one power into one life, and meet in heart there; so far as they thus meet, there is true unity among them.

Quest. 2. Wherein doth this unity consist?

Ans. In the life, in the nature, in the Spirit wherein they are all begotten, and of which they are formed, and where their meeting is. It consists not in any outward or inward thing of an inferior nature; but only keeps within the limits and bounds of the same nature. The doing the same thing, the thinking the same thing, the speaking the same thing, this doth not unite here in this state, in this nature; but only the doing, or thinking, or speaking of it in the same life. Yea, though the doings, or thoughts, or words be divers; yet if they proceed from the same principle and nature, there is a true unity felt therein, where the life alone is judge.

Quest. 3. How is the unity preserved?

Ans. Only by abiding in the life; only by keeping to the power, and in the principle, from whence the unity sprang, and in which it stands. Here is a knitting of natures, and a fellowship in the same spiritual centre. Here the divers and different motions of several members in the body (thus coming from the life and Spirit of the body) are known to, and owned by, the same life, where it is fresh and sensible.

It is not keeping up an outward knowledge (or belief concerning things) that unites, nor keeping up an outward conformity in actions, &c., for these may be held and done by another part in man, and in another nature; but it is by keeping and acting in that which did at first unite. In this there is neither matter nor room for division; and he that is within these limits, cannot but be found in the oneness.

Quest. 4. How is the unity interrupted?

Ans. By the interposition of any thing of a different nature or spirit from the life. When any thing of the earthly or sensual part comes between the soul and the life, this interrupts the soul's unity with the life itself; and it also interrupts its unity with the life in others, and the unity of the life in others with it. Any thing of the man's spirit, of the man's wisdom, of the man's will, not bowed down, and brought into subjection, and so not coming forth in and under the authority and guidance of life, in this is somewhat of the nature of division: yea, the very knowledge of truth, and holding of it forth by the man's wisdom, and in his will, out of the movings and power of the life, brings a damp upon the life, and interrupts the unity; for the life in others cannot unite with this in spirit, though it may own the words to be true.

Quest. 5. How may unity be recovered, if at any time decaying?

Ans. In the Lord alone is the recovery of Israel, from any degree of loss in any kind, at any time; who alone can teach to retire into, and to be found in, that wherein the unity is and stands, and into which division cannot enter. This is the way of restoring unity to Israel, upon the sense of any want thereof; even every one, through the Lord's help, retiring (in his own particular) and furthering the retirings of others to the principle of life, that every one there may feel the washing from what hath in any measure corrupted, and the new-begetting into the power of life. From this the true and lasting unity will spring amain, to the gladding of all hearts that know the sweetness of it, and who cannot but naturally and most earnestly desire it. Oh!

mark therefore; the way is not by striving to beget into one and the same apprehension concerning things, nor by endeavoring to bring into one and the same practices; but by alluring and drawing into that wherein the unity consists, and which brings it forth in the vessels, which are seasoned therewith and ordered thereby. And from this let all wait for the daily new and living knowledge, and for the ordering of their conversations and practices in that light, (and drawings thereof) and in that simplicity and integrity of heart which the Spirit of life at present holdeth forth and worketh in them; and the life will be felt, and the name of the Lord praised in all the tents of Jacob, and through all the inhabitants of his Israel; and there will be but *one heart, and one soul, and one spirit, and one mind, and one way and power of life;* and what is already wrought in every heart, the Lord will be acknowledged in, and his name praised: and the Lord's season contentedly waited for his filling up of what is wanting anywhere. So the living God (the God of Israel, the God of everlasting tender bowels and compassions to Israel) fill the vessels of his heritage with his life, and cause the peace and love of his holy nature and Spirit to descend upon their dwellings, and to spring up powerfully in them towards his living truth, and towards one another.

And let all strive to excel in tenderness, and in long-suffering, and to be kept out of hard and evil thoughts one of another, and from harsh interpretations concerning any thing relating to one another. Oh! this is unworthy to be found in an Israelite towards an Egyptian; but exceeding shameful and inexcusable to be found in one brother towards another. How many weaknesses doth the Lord pass by in us! How ready is he to interpret every thing well concerning his disciples, that may bear a good interpretation! "The spirit" saith he "is willing, but the flesh is weak." When they had been all scattered from him upon his death, he did not afterwards upbraid them; but sweetly gathered them again. O dear friends! have we received the same life of sweetness? Let us bring forth the same sweet fruits,

being ready to excuse, and to receive what may tend towards the excuse of another in any doubtful case; and where there is any evil manifest, wait, oh wait, to overcome it with good! Oh! let us not spend the strength of our spirits in crying out of one another because of evil; but watch and wait where the mercy and the healing virtue will please to arise. O Lord, my God, when thou hast shown the wants of Israel in any kind sufficiently, whether in the particular, or in the general, bring forth the supply thereof from thy fulness, so ordering it in thine eternal wisdom, that all may be ashamed and abased before thee, and thy name praised in and over all.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

CONCERNING

GOD'S SEEKING OUT HIS ISRAEL:

LIKEWISE

CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE, WHEREBY HE SEEKETH THEM;

AND

THE WAY OF THEIR CLOSING WITH HIS SPIRIT THEREIN.

AS ALSO CONCERNING

THE TWO COVENANTS;

UNDER ONE WHEREOF HE PLEASETH TO EXERCISE AND PREPARE THEM FOR THE LIFE AND INHERITANCE, WHICH HE HATH TREASURED UP FOR THEM IN THE OTHER.

WITH A POSTSCRIPT, RELATING SOME THINGS NECESSARY FOR LOST MAN TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH, IN HIS TRAVELS FROM HIS LOST ESTATE.

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

To such in Godmanchester, and thereabouts, who bear the reproachful name of Quakers; whose religion began in the power, and who still abide and walk on in the power, waiting to be perfected in the full manifestation and appearance thereof.

DEAR FRIENDS IN GOD'S PURE ETERNAL TRUTH,

IT was my lot once to be among you in a meeting, together with a certain friend, where I had a word unto you from the Lord, while the said friend was declaring. But being exceedingly bowed down in spirit, and afraid to interrupt the service in him (whom I looked upon as far more abundantly grown up in the life, and fitter to minister from the life), I waited till the life in him should stop. But then those words, which had often sprung in me before, sprung not again; and I durst not then speak them from a bare remembrance of them, not finding the Spirit of the Lord then giving them me to speak. So I went away with a burthen on my own soul, and also with a sense of some loss to you of some part of the good which the Lord intended for you. Since that time, I have often remembered the thing with grief; crying to the Lord, that that which hath so often stopped the life in me, and my service in the life might in his good time be removed; and that the day might come, wherein the man might never more be or appear, as of himself, or as a determiner concerning the things which flow from the life, but that the life might have its free course and current through me, in its own pure streamings, to the delighting of my own heart in the Lord, and the refreshing of others. And indeed this day I exceedingly long for, that nothing of self might be left to be brought forth, and that all which is of the life might spring up and flourish, both in me and everywhere.

Now one morning, as my heart was breathing towards the Lord, not having a thought either of you or this thing,

the very same words which were given me in that meeting, sprang up again livingly in me, with a pointing to write them down, with what the Lord should please to give in further, and send them to you, together with a paper, which was a little before written, concerning the two covenants. And when I had almost finished what was then given me to write, I was further directed to annex to the first paper another concerning the principle.

How the Lord shall please to improve them to your advantage, or to the advantage of any others, I leave to him; it being the earnest desire of my heart, that his work may prosper in his hand, and that the light and power which issueth forth from him for the salvation of souls, may be effectual thereunto; and that nothing of love, of mercy, of goodness, of life, of salvation, of his searching and healing virtue may be held back by him, which the state or condition of any of his sheep or lambs (whether lost or gathered) calleth for. That his Israel may become the glory of the earth, and all nations may be refreshed with beholding the beauty, and tasting the sweetness, of life and righteousness, which shall assuredly flow forth from his sanctuary. And surely the time is not far off (whatever the eye of sense may judge, and however things may appear to man's understanding) wherein Israel shall be no more compelled to worship in the temples of men's building and dedicating; but shall in the beauty of holiness. For the day is come (yea, the blessed day is come) wherein the Lord God of life will build up his Zion, and appear there in his glory; Amen, hallelujah.

CONCERNING

GOD'S SEEKING OUT HIS ISRAEL.

THIS is the word which was given to me; *The Shepherd of Israel is seeking out his sheep, even the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Concerning which, these three Questions sprang up in me one after another, as I was about to write, and writing.

Quest. 1. Who are his sheep?

Ans. His sheep are the sons of men; the lost sheep of the house of Israel are those among the sons of men, who have felt touches of his life, begettings into his nature, and were in some measure gathered into some appearance and dispensation of his life by his Holy Spirit; wherein they felt warmth from God in their spirits, and a delight and joy in what they felt, and a longing after a further manifestation of him. These were his sheep, in a gathered estate in some degree, by those dispensations of life in the darkness, which had some strength in them to gather from under the darkness, and did gather into that measure of light and life that was then dispensed. But the sheep cleaving to the dispensations, (which were very weak and imperfect, and had little of Spirit, but very much of flesh in them) and not following the Lamb out of them into the further dispensations of life, into which he stood ready to lead; the Lord brake them in pieces, departed from them, and left the life to be made a prey of, and brought under the captivity of death; so that the sheep were scattered upon the mountains, and every beast of prey was ready to fasten his teeth on them and devour them. Oh! the precious buddings forth of the virtue and power of God, that were to be found in the several sorts of professors, while they sought the Lord only, and the knowledge of one another in the breathing spirit,

and minded not the outward form, but the feeling of life in their duties and ordinances!

But when they began to mind the form, and cry up several forms; the Lord also began to loathe the forms, and did not give forth that among them, which formerly they met with, but took away the kernel, and left them the shell: and oh, how dry and barren have they become since! Where is the feeling of life? Where is the love to one another in the living sense? Where is the zeal after, and earnest seeking of, the power of religion? Where is the nature of the sheep to be found in them? And where is the presence of the Shepherd among them? Are they not *lost sheep* indeed, lost to God, lost to themselves? Have they not lost the *holy, pure, sweet, meek, heavenly, tender, gentle nature of the sheep?* Have they not lost the *pasture and the fold*, whereon they were wont to feed, and wherein they were wont to lie down safe? Have they not lost the *preserver of their souls* from the devouring spirit? Nay, have they not lost the very *seed of life*, which the good husbandman did sow in them? And do not evil seeds shoot up in the stead thereof, to the poisoning of their hearts, and blemishing of their conversations? And are not some of them insensible of their loss, and lie still drowned in their forms, thinking to confine the appearance of the free life and unlimited Spirit there? Others of them sick, and deeply wounded and languishing, not knowing where to meet with the good Shepherd, nor how to make shift without him? Oh, the cries of the desolate and mourning souls, which love God at their hearts, and have the relics of his nature left in them in a seed still; which he once begot and brought forth in some freshness! Oh, their deep anguish! their miserable lost condition for want of meeting with the Physician! their pantings, their tears, their distresses, their roarings out, their overwhelmings, their several kinds of captivities, and the cruelties exercised upon their spirits by the captiver, even break my heart, that I am almost overwhelmed in the sense of their misery! But my heart is somewhat comforted with the freshness of this testimony, which hath often risen up in

the immediate life of God in my heart; and I have heard his voice speaking it, even that *he will seek them out.* And I know he hath the skill to find them, in their several mourning holes, wherein they lie hid; and the pits whereinto they are tumbled; and the briars and thorns of the wilderness, wherewith they are torn, and wherein they are twisted and entangled, and held pining to death; and in the prisons, and chains, and fetters of their spirits, wherein they are closed up and bound down by the enemy of their souls.

Quest. 2. How will he seek them, and how will he find them out?

Ans. By the light of his Spirit shining in their hearts, by which he will touch and quicken the sheep's life, and open the sheep's ear, and persuade the heart to know and believe that it is he that visiteth in his tender mercy, and that he will have mercy on, and show compassion to, that which hath long been cast off and forsaken; and he will be their God, and they shall be his people; even the house of Israel that had departed from him; and that he had not forgotten them, but waited for the hour of mercy, and for the season of the bringing forth of that life and power, whose searching and healing virtue will reach to the utmost extremity of their conditions.

Quest. 3. What will he do with them, when he hath sought after and found them out?

Ans. He will gather them into the fold of life, and lead them into the pastures of life, and feed them with the food of life, as their conditions are able to bear; he will be fitting them by the exercises of his Spirit, for their passages from death to life; and as they are capable, so he will be still translating them from the one into the other. He will bring them from their several false-built states in the land of Egypt (or Babylon) into a true wilderness state; and there, as he wears out the old nature in them, so will he speak comfortably to them, and build up the new; and nourish the true Israelitish babe there with manna from heaven; and after he is grown up to a man's estate, and hath received the inward circumcision, lead him into the

pleasant land, where there are rich pastures, and the sweet still waters, and the precious milk and honey of the living, with which the land flows naturally, and which yields pure nourishment to all the living offspring. Oh! my heart is not able to contain the sense of all that God will do for Israel, or of what he will be to them, or of what they shall be to him, when he hath finished his work upon them, and brought them forth (through the strength of his covenant) in the nature, and into the possession, of his life.

But sure I am he hath begun his work; the light of the day (even of the everlasting day) hath sprung and visited many; the principle of life hath been revealed in the hearts of many; and many are gathering into it, and find the man sinking and dying; and the life rising and living in them day by day. And though the passage be bitter, and the passover still eaten with bitter herbs, and the devourer often let loose and suffered to nip and destroy; yet out of the eater at last comes forth meat, and out of the strong one in the issue comes forth sweetness. Yea, though there be no faith found to close in with the light, nor any strength left to obey or follow, because of the deep foregoing breakings (wherein both nature and spirit were all dashed in pieces, and swallowed up in confusion); yet the breath of life and the power of the light (in process of exercises, and after much deep misery, and impossibilities, to the sight and judgment of sense) at length raiseth up a little seed in the longing soul; which receiveth and bringeth forth, after a hidden way, that which it could not. And here life is indeed of grace, and wholly of the seed, in this state. Only wait to learn and know in spirit (and then take heed of despising) the weak beginnings and dawnings of light, in the secret stirrings and movings of the principle of life; and wait also for a watch to be set up in thee against that fleshly wisdom and understanding, which will be apt to be judging about the work of God in thy heart; for if it prevail so far, it will then also be begetting in thee despisings of, and turnings from, the low beginnings thereof, and so divert thy feet from the path of life. For the

prevention whereof, and for the furtherance of thy soul, in its closing with, and travelling on, in the light and guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, this following paper is added.

CONCERNING THE SEED OR INWARD PRINCIPLE, WHEREBY LIFE IS BEGOTTEN AND MAINTAINED IN THE HEART.

THE Lord God, who is full of everlasting bowels of compassion towards mankind in general, but more especially towards those, in whom he hath begotten a sense of the want of him, with breathings and desires after him; hath chosen a seed or inward principle of life to appear in, towards the breaking the bonds of their captivity, and the bringing them from under the power and misery of death.

This, many who have been overwhelmed with misery, and whose spirits have melted and failed with the want of the sense of their God, and have felt that life, which was formerly built up in them, broken down and laid waste; and their communion with God swallowed up in the ruins thereof; and their souls ready utterly to perish and be devoured by the enemy every moment; after the cutting off of their hopes, and the shutting up of their eyes towards all ways of relief; I say, after all this, and much more than can be expressed, in the tender mercy of the Lord, have they felt this principle revealed in their hearts, and their hearts by degrees, through the skill and same mercy of the Lord, which revealed the principle (and not from any worthiness, or faith and obedience of theirs; for that was as freely given and preserved, as the principle itself was revealed), gathered into the principle, where the life reigns, and where the strength and dominion of death is broken in all those, who by the allurings and guidings of the Spirit of the Lord are led thither.

Now the main thing necessary towards the redemption of the soul is, after the revealing of this principle, and some sense and feeling of it, and the turning of the mind tow-

ards it, to wait to be made more and more acquainted with it, that in the stirrings, movings, and leadings thereof, there be a ready giving up to be gathered into it, and to be guided by it.

For though this principle be all life, yet it is at first but as a seed, and the appearance of the Lord in it is but as in a seed; very little, low, weak, hard to be discerned, easy to be overlooked and despised, and some greater and more undeniable appearance expected. Yet that is not the way, but the soul must become subject unto, and bowed under, this little appearance; and so as the seed gets advantage, and grows bigger and larger in thy heart, the appearance of the Lord will be greater and fuller there. But to look for the greater appearance, before the seed be owned and received in its lesser appearance (and the vessel thereby fitted for the greater appearance) is not the way of God, but the deceit of the enemy, whereby he would destroy the soul, and cut it off from the Lord for ever; which he certainly will do, if he can keep the seed from growing there, and the soul from joining with and growing into it.

Therefore watch to feel the savor of life in thy heart day by day, and therein to feel leadings and drawings from the life, suitable to thy state; for in this savor, and in these drawings, rises the true light, which leads into the way of life. And then watch against the reasonings and disputations which the enemy will raise in thy mind, who will strive to make thee a judge over these drawings; whereas the light, which ariseth in the savor and in the drawings, is thy King (though in this low appearance), and not to be judged by thy mind, thoughts, and reasonings, but to judge them all down, and be bowed unto and obeyed by thee. And consider, in the weight of thy spirit, art thou (in thy darkness, and with thy earthly mind) fit to be a judge concerning the light which ariseth in thee? Or rather, is not the light, in its lowest and weakest appearance, appointed and fitted by the Lord to judge thee, and make thee bow down in fear and trembling before it? And thy crown (thou in thy highest exaltation) is to be cast at the

lowest footstep thereof; and then it will in some measure, thou lying at the foot thereof, and bowing in spirit before it, enter into thee, and enlighten and quicken thee. But in thy being wise about it, or taking upon thee to judge concerning it, it will stand at a distance from thee, and leave thee in thy darkness and captivity.

Therefore consider where thou art, and breathe unto the Lord to reveal that unto thee which is proper for thee at present, and to bow thy spirit under his present will and manifestation to thee.

And be content to be little and low, and to receive little and low instructions from God, and to walk in the path of brokenness and humility before the Lord; for this is his way of fitting for, and advancing into, the high and glorious power of his life. And this my soul is assured of, that none shall enter into, or abide in, his kingdom, but as they become little, poor, and naked, and as they are led by the little child of God's begetting; who not at all answers the wisdom of man and his expectations, but still confounds them, and leads on in such a path, as, if the eye of man's wisdom be open, it will still be crying out it can never bring to life. Yet that which disputeth not, but believeth, at seasons feels a progress, and that the growth of life had advantage in the heart by those very things, which at present seemed to give death the advantage.

Therefore watch against thy understanding, and all the workings thereof, as ever thou desirest life; for it will still betray thee, and either keep thee from the way, or turn thee out of the way, whenever thou hearkenest to it. And mark this: That which God sows and brings up in thee is a sensible plant, not a knowing mind; and thy right judgment is only in the sensibleness of that plant, and not in the understanding or comprehension of thy mind; yea, that sensible plant (which thy wisdom will be very apt to despise and perk over) must batter down and bring to nothing thy understanding, and grow up in the stead of it, if ever thy soul be made a habitation for the life. Therefore sink into the feeling, and dwell in the feeling, and wait for the savor

of the principle of life, and the touches and drawings of the savor, and walk along in it towards the land of life, parting with all, and leaving behind thee, whatever the savor of life disrelisheth; and entering into, and taking up, whatever the savor of life relisheth, that thou mayest be prepared for the Lord, and for the glorious appearance of his Spirit in thee.

And as thou art led into this, and becomest subject to this; so thou wilt taste the Lord, and feel the sweetness of his ointment, and the peace of his nature, and the joy of the beginnings of his kingdom in thy heart, and the blotting out of thy iniquities for his own name's sake. For though the enemy may lay a load upon thee, and fill thee as much as he can with his filth, and lay it close to thy charge, insomuch as thou art not able to acquit thyself at all, but art as ready to charge thyself therewith, as the enemy is to charge thee; yet the Lord considereth the seed he hath sown in thee, and the desire which he hath wrought in thy heart to be joined thereunto; and he knoweth whence the stirring of this mind is, and how weak thou art in this hour of thy darkness and captivity; and the intent of his heart is to deliver thee from all this, and not to condemn thee for it.

But oh! take heed of limiting the Lord to give forth so clear a light, as the natural understanding will be judging necessary; but be content with the light which ariseth in the savor, and shineth inwardly to thy spirit in the drawing; and be subject and bowed under the light of the drawing, though ever so much against the light of the creaturely understanding, and the reasonings thereof.

Clearness of light is a state which is to be grown up into: but before thou comest to this, thy understanding must be darkened, confounded, and brought to nothing; and thou canst not have such a clearness there, while it is confounding. There is indeed a true clearness in the principle of life (proportionable to its state and growth) even then; but the reasonings of thy dark mind will be continually overclouding and overbearing it (as if it were darkness, and not the light), and will prevail, unless thou be kept in the savor,

and suffer not thy understanding to judge, but keep it under the judgment of the savor. Mark, therefore, heedfully this which follows:—

The first work of the Lord, is to confound the knowledge and understanding of the creature; especially in those who have been deep in wisdom and experience of things; for if they were not closely pursued with darkness and confusion, they would presently be gathering a stock into the old storehouse again, and so grow wise after the flesh, and never learn the life of the Spirit. Now in this work of confounding, how can the leadings of God's Spirit be manifest and clear after the flesh, and to the fleshly understanding? Yea, if they were manifest after this manner, how were it possible to withhold the fleshly part from drinking them in? and so the man would live again, but the seed not live, which gains its life (and being and form and perfection) in the man, by the death of the man; even by the man's being hunted, and battered, and broken out of his wisdom, and knowledge, and reasoning, and comprehension; and becoming as a fool or child, being able to know nothing, nor retain nothing, nor perform nothing, nor keep his standing; but still as he is led, and taught, and created, and preserved in the power, and by the presence of the life.

Concerning the two covenants.

What *is the covenant of the law?* Doth it not contain and hold forth eternal life to man, upon his faith in, and obedience to the Spirit of God?

What is the covenant of the gospel? Doth it not contain the promise to the seed, and life to man through the seed, and forgiveness of his sins for the seed's sake, and the uniting of his heart to, and preserving it in, the seed, through the grace; as also repentance, faith, and obedience from the grace?

Mark then the difference between the two covenants. The covenant of the law is all of works, and according to

works; yea, even the faith that is there found (which is begotten and brought forth in man by virtue of that covenant) is of the man, or of the working principle. The covenant of the gospel is all of grace; and the very works that are found are from the grace, and the seed bestowed and conveyed by promise.

Now mark: The seed (or standing principle of life) in both covenants is the same. It is the same Christ by which Adam stood before the fall, and which was the promised seed after the fall. The light of both the covenants is the same, even the eternal light of the Spirit. The life and power is the same, even the life and power of the Spirit. The end or mark, at which man aims, and towards which he travels, in both is the same; even the land of rest and peace in the Spirit of the Father, who begets a living soul under both covenants. But the terms of the covenants, and the manner of dispensing them, are different; and the wombs, whereof the children of each covenant are born, are different likewise; the one being the working nature (which also came from God, and hath its blessing from him in its obedience and subjection to him), the other the womb of grace, which brings forth the child of grace in man, according to, and by virtue of, the promise; and doth not find a will in the day of man's choice and liberty, but createth a will in the day of God's powerful appearance in it.

Yet this seed of promise, or this new man begotten by the seed of life according to the promise, must walk through the law, and travel through all the dark paths of that covenant, before it come to inherit the promised land; where the rigor of the law and weakness of the flesh will be thoroughly felt, and many transgressions and many stripes; yea, many captivities and cuttings off from the life may be felt also; yea, the seed of the first covenant may live and flourish, and enjoy and boast much of God, while this seed is miserable. But when this womb is visited with the strength of grace, and free power of life, and bringeth forth her children therein, and no more is called for from the working part of man, but all brought forth in the free, full,

and fresh power of life; then shall the seed of Israel, after the promise, become an everlasting habitation for, and a perfect joy in, the life.

Therefore distinguish in spirit between the law and grace, and the covenants of each, and the dispensations of each, and how they are mixed and intermingled, both towards man and towards the seed, in the several dispensations in which each is brought forth. For there hath been no perfect covenant brought forth, either of works or of grace (in a way of public administration), since the fall of Adam. Had there been a perfect covenant of works, there had been no capacity of salvation thereby to fallen man. Had there been a perfect covenant of grace, there had been no possibility or capacity of destruction: for grace, in its perfect going forth, cannot but overcome and save the man. But God ordereth both these covenants, both towards the man and towards the seed, according to the state of the man and the state of the seed, and according to what, in his eternal wisdom, he judgeth meet to work upon them thereby.

Man being fallen, and having lost his strength of faith and obedience in and to the requirings of God's Spirit, the visitation of him is now by grace, and not merely to call forth what is left in him, but to help him with light and power, and by the influences of the grace and of the power to quicken him towards God. Yet man, in the receiving of this, is apt to overlook the grace, and attribute too much to his own strength, thinking himself somewhat, because of the grace and power which hath visited him, and new refreshed the strength and nature of his principle in him again. Hereby he is apt to fix his standing on his obedience to the Spirit or appearance of the grace, and so in effect builds his life and hopes on his own principle again, or on a new-received power, as held or kept to by him (which he may fall from now, as well as he did at first), and not on the free begetting and free preserving of a principle of life in him.

This visitation of grace is to all mankind, there being none upon earth, whom the Lord doth not thus seek and

visit with the light of his eternal life, thus administered through the grace; which so far as they fall in with, the Lord doth receive them and beget life in them, ingrafting them into the living vine, and preserving them according to their abiding in it, and according to their obedience to him in the springings up of the sap of the vine in them.

But besides this common administration of the grace to all mankind, God formerly picked out a people after the flesh of Abraham, and afterwards a people after the spirit of Abraham, towards whom, in a more peculiar way, his grace did administer itself, and whom he dealt with, not as with other nations, but chose to love and work up into life and communion with himself, by a more especial administration and visitation of his love and grace. The one of these were that people of the Jews, the other the believing Christians.

With the Jews he remembered the covenant with Abraham. By virtue of that he loved and chose them to be his people after the flesh, or his outward people; by virtue of that he brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, brought them into Canaan, giving them an inheritance therein, and delivering them from their enemies time after time.

Yet he also made another covenant with them (even that of the law) which was suitable to their state, and which their nature desired, and chose to walk with God in, but hardly ever kept it, and so brought the curse and misery due thereby upon their heads, and at last were utterly cut off, so far and so long as the Lord pleaseth to let the curse of that covenant have power over them, until he shall please again to remember to them his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and breathe life through it into their dry bones.

Now though God did make this covenant with them, because they were fleshly, and their present state required it, yet he did not disannul or make void the other to them, all the while their day lasted; but remembered loving-kindness and mercy towards them in it, often delivering and redeeming them for his own name's sake, pointing them

also to the word in the heart, and the gracious administration thereof. But they were blinded and held captive in the earthly nature and principle, and in the law thereof, and held their marriage and union with God thereby. And see, though this administration to the Jews (wherein God did strive with them by his Spirit, and sometimes stir life, and beget a true sensibleness in many of them, calling to them for the circumcision of the heart, and pointing them to the principle of life in the heart, whereby it might be circumcised) though this advanced them far above the Heathen; yet they, through the flesh and the letter, at last fell below the very state of the Heathen, proving greater enemies to, and persecutors of, the life than they; and so the Lord brake them off from the Olive-tree into which they were ingrafted, and cut them off from the covenant which he had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whereas, thitherto (though he had often been provoked by, and sorely offended with, them), yet he had still loved them for their fathers' sake. After them, and in their stead, he chose the believing Gentiles, ingrafted them into the stock from whence these were broken, letting them into a sweeter and fuller, and more spiritual and abiding state, and influences of the covenant. For here the life was manifested, and the light did shine in great beauty and clearness. And they were gathered into the true fold of the Shepherd (besides the outward state, which was also built up by the Lord, and preserved for a season among them); and they saw their standing to be by and in the grace, and were established in the grace, and could feel the good pleasure calling, the good pleasure working, the good pleasure being and doing all in them; and could cry grace, grace, to this building; and say, not for any works that they had wrought, or for their faith in, or obedience to, the light of life, which was made manifest; but of his own mercy he saved them, who wrought in them both the will and the deed of his own good pleasure, and preserved them by his power through faith (which was of his gift and begetting) unto salvation.

Yet for all this, there was somewhat of the law or light eternal to be administered unto them, which was suitable to the natural part or first principle through which they were to travel, even until the man, or first nature, was wholly wasted; whereby some of them were in danger of falling away wholly, others of coming under the chastisement and judgment, with which the Lord pursued them, that they might not be utterly condemned with the world. Mark, therefore, this brief sum of the matter:—

1. Man fell under the first covenant: his restitution is never to be thereby, but by the second; through which God works up vessels into a state of life and glory in the administration of his grace.

2. But in this working up of the vessel, he sees necessary to make use of the other covenant, according to the capacity that is left in man to answer it; and so as that capacity wears out, the covenant of the law wasteth and passeth away by degrees, and the covenant of grace succeeds and fills up the room thereof.

3. There is great danger of falling from the life for some, as also of chastisements and judgments to others, while this capacity remains; even while the earthly nature, spirit, and principle is not worn out, by the entrance, death, and resurrection of the principle of life in the heart.

4. When the first principle is wholly dead, and the heart perfectly formed in the life, and all perfectly raised and renewed in the life; then there is no danger of falling, or fear of chastisement; but perfect life, and peace, and joy with God in his Spirit of power and glory for evermore.

5. Though God begin with man in a covenant of grace, and bring in a covenant of the law to man (suitable to his present state) only in subserviency to the covenant of grace; and would not have man stick there, but cling to him in the grace, and seek remission through the grace for his own name's sake; yet man, through the prevalency of the first principle in him (and his looking on God through that), is apt to fix on this covenant, and draw comfort or discouragement to himself from his own obedience or failings, and

not live on the freeness of God's love, and the faithfulness of his heart to the soul in all conditions, for his Christ's sake.

This hath been the great error of Israel (even of Israel after the flesh, and of Israel after the spirit also), that while God lays hold on them by his love, promise, mercy, and grace; yet they lay hold on him by another covenant; even their obedience to the laws he gives forth; not knowing, that the obedience to the first covenant must be a fruit of the second; and that they are not beloved or accepted for that, but that that flows into them, and is brought forth in them through the love, and through the free and powerful workings thereof in them. I say, this (to wit, their obedience) is not the ground of their acceptance or being loved, so far as they are in this covenant; though as far as the other hath yet an influence, it hath some force in this respect. But this the eye is to pass through, and to be fixed on the other covenant, still waiting for the revealing and manifesting the riches of the mercy thereof, and to feel the washing and cleansing thereof from all the guilt, which under the remainders of the first covenant will be daily contracting, while any thing of the earthly principle and offending part is left standing.

There hath been in this day a very glorious administration of life to the sons of men (after the long foregoing night), wherein both these covenants have been again administered in Spirit, suitable to the state of the persons whereto they have been administered. And because of the necessity of faith and obedience in the new covenant (both to the seed and to the man), the man is so apt to fix his eye and build his hopes upon them, and not upon the free love of him that works them in him, that he is in danger of falling from and dishonoring the free grace, which is the hope of Israel, and of losing his state, which is not sure (how far soever it be advanced in a present power and dominion), further than it is built upon and fixed in the grace. And therefore is this given forth, that the life in Israel may be sure and lasting, and that they may grow up perfectly, out of the principle of nature, into the principle of grace, and know

the difference between their being united to, and living in, God, either in the fear, faith, or love, so far as they can receive or retain them; and God's living in them, and creating continually the fear, faith, and love in them, and bringing forth all the fruits thereof in and from himself.

For though the covenants are and have been still the same from the beginning, yet the manifestations of them have been still greater and greater. And a greater manifestation may yet be of the love and life of God, and the sweet, free nature of his covenant, than hath hitherto been, or yet is; which Israel is to wait for and feel the need of, before it be brought forth. And though all those forementioned (to wit, of *fear, faith, and love*) are precious states, which God works his Israel up to, in and by the covenant of his grace, according to their several growths and capacities; yea, and according to which the delight and pleasure of his soul is in them; yet the absolute assurance is only in the latter, even where the creature is so gathered into the life of God, that its state depends not at all upon what itself is, or doth, but only upon what God is and will be to his freely of himself, and for his own name's sake.

This is written in love, for preservation; and not for discouragement or destruction; but that that which standeth, may feel where to fix. For in the highest state that man can be advanced to, yet if any of the creaturely principle be left in him unsubdued, and not yet buried with the seed into its death, there is so far a capacity of falling; and his fall, in case the Lord do suffer his feet to slip, will be the greater, by how much the higher and more exalted he was in the dominion and presence of the power, and by how much the more it was unexpected by him.

And this my heart hath often said within me, and still saith to a weary soul, which hath felt the touches of life, and desireth everlasting unity with it; yea, to all that desire to walk with God, and to abide in the power of his life in any dispensation; Keep the eye of thy mind to the grace which visits thee; not so much to the light which comes from the grace, as to the grace from which the light comes;

and daily look for help and remission from it, as freely as thou hadst at first. And in all losses and darknesses, and risings up of guilt and condemnation, cast thyself at the foot of it, saying in thy heart, If thou hadst not freely visited me at first, I had not set one step in the path of life; and if thou dost not as freely visit me still, and renew life in me daily of thine own accord, and from the same love and goodness, I cannot but be liable to miscarry. Oh that I might obey every beam of thy light, and every moving of thy life! but I dare not undertake it. Oh that thou wouldst undertake for me my righteousness, my obedience, my love to thee! My faith in thee is like the morning dew, which soon passeth away, and I cannot find or come at it again! Oh, raise up life from an everlasting seed, and gather my heart into it, and preserve me in it; not according to what I am or have done, or yet can be or do; but for thine own name's sake, and in thy love to thy seed, and to thy creature in and through thy seed by the promise!

Thus as any grow into the covenant of grace, through the covenant of works (which is necessary to be dispensed in some measure, till the man's nature and principle be wholly worn out by it), they will find sure footing there, and building upon that, from which the soul (that cleaveth to it in the virtue and nature that floweth from it) can never be removed. Yea, the peace and safety of Israel in their travels (fixing here) will be greater, and their assurance greater, and their falls and the prevailings of the enemy not so dangerous (that being had recourse to, which never fails of healing that soul which lies at the foot of it, and in heart waits its season); however they may be hurried and driven about with tempests, through the violence of the enemy, and good pleasure of Him, who seeth it fit for the present state of the soul, to have it thus exercised.

The intent of God, in the salvation of man, is to magnify the riches of his grace, and the freeness of his love. And this is effected, as man is broken in his natural principle and power of believing and obeying; and a seed of life freely raised up in him, and he freely gathered into it, and

preserved in it. And where is the boaster here? Or where is he, who, in this state, can throw a stone at another because of his transgressions? Nay, nay; he that is freely forgiven, and lives merely and for ever by mercy alone, he is formed and brought forth in the tenderness of the bowels which begat and nourish him; and he crieth mightily for the spreading of the same bowels over other sinners, waiting for the season of their visitation and gathering into the same love, and by the same powerful hand, if it may be.

O my God, bring up the power and sweetness of thy life in Israel, and show mercy to all nations! Purge the earth with thy fan, scatter the corruption thereof from the hearts of the sons of men, and make them the paradise of thy pleasure; that thou, O living God, mayst dwell in, and shine forth from, thy temple; and it may no longer lie waste, nor the abomination of desolation defile it, to the dishonor of thy name, and to the ruin and misery of thy creation!

POSTSCRIPT.

Some things are exceeding necessary for lost man to be acquainted with, in his travels from his lost estate, into the life and peace of God: as,

1. To know his lost estate and misery for ever, unless the Lord pity and help him.

2. To know the light, wherewith the Lord visits the souls that sit in darkness; that he may wait for the shinings thereof, and in them travel with the leading Spirit of life, from the darkness and death of sin towards the land of the living.

3. To breathe unto the Lord, and wait to have his heart joined to the light and power of life daily, and separated from the powers of death and darkness, under which he was, and still is, a captive, but as the Lord appears for him, and delivers him.

4. To put forth all the strength of his soul and mind, and

all the members of his body, in the service of the Lord. For as he is, in any measure, set free by the Lord from the service of sin; so is he to serve and obey the Lord in righteousness.

5. To wait daily to receive the strength from the Lord, wherewith he serveth the Lord. For though, by the redemption of the Lord, he feels the creaturely part, in some measure, renewed and restored, and an ability received to serve righteousness, which before he had not; yet this is not so given to him, as that the Lord hath it not still in his hand, who can stop or let it out at his pleasure. And happy is that man, who looketh not upon himself as somewhat, because of what in any kind he hath received, but feeleth his dependence upon the Lord.

6. To feel the grace and mercy of the Lord, in whatever he receiveth from the Lord, or whatever he doeth for the Lord. It is all of the Lord; happy is the man that sees it. It is the mercy of the Lord, that man is not consumed. It is the mercy of the Lord, that any man in any state (or degree of life and redemption) is preserved. *The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever, therefore is Israel safe.* This will be the song of praise in the house of the Lord for ever.

7. To wait for the wasting of the man, and the raising up of the seed day by day; that that to which the covenant of works is natural, and which cannot but desire it and seek to live by it, may be worn out; and that to which the covenant of grace is as natural (if not more), and which alone lives by the promise, and through the faith, and in the grace which freely flows from the eternal fountain, may be raised up, and succeed in the place and stead thereof.

Here is safety indeed. Here is everlasting righteousness so brought in, as that it can never be removed out of the heart more. Here everlasting life and the soul are one for ever. Here is no more going into captivity; which Israel, settled in Canaan, and enjoying the sweetness and rest thereof, under the first covenant may. Here are no tears, nor sighing, nor departing from the life, nor grieving the Holy Spirit of the Lord, nor being grieved by it any more;

but what the heart desires of God, and what God desires of the heart, mutually received; and the going forth, and the coming in, and the abiding, one and the same for ever; the same life and power and love and eternal sweetness being all and in all for ever. This is the mark of Israel, and the haven of its eternal rest, to which the Lord is leading the *poor*, *hungry*, *empty*, *mourning*, *afflicted*, *tossed* souls, to whom it is as sure in the love and good-will of God (and in the counsel of his heart determined thereupon), as if they were already in it.

TO FRIENDS

IN ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, HOLLAND, NEW ENGLAND, BARBADOES, OR ANYWHERE ELSE, WHERE THE LORD GOD SHALL ORDER THIS TO COME, IN THE TENDER SPIRIT OF LIFE AND LOVE, GREETING.

O FRIENDS!

IN the pure love of God, and fresh breath of his living Spirit, is it now on my heart to write unto you, in fear, in tenderness, in meltings, and true sense of spirit; and the Lord so guide my heart and words, as that they may reach the witness in the hearts of all that shall read, and may be felt by that to be purely of God, and not at all of the birth, will, or wisdom of the flesh.

I remember, I remember, O Friends! and it is in my heart to put you in remembrance of the cloudy, dismal, and dark day, wherein the Shepherd of Israel visited our souls, and what condition we were in, when he caused the light of life to shine upon our tabernacles, and to spring up in us. Oh the desolation, the desolation that our souls were in, in that day! Oh the wanderings up and down, the seekings, huntings, mournings, bitter complaints, and deep distresses for want of our God, and for want of the guidance of his good Spirit! Who can utter now what was then felt of the thickness of darkness, of the misery, the loss, the dreadful captivity that our poor souls were entangled and wrapped up in? Oh, how acceptable was the visitation of God then! how deep was the sense of his tender mercy in visiting! how glad was the soul then of the living path revealed! how unfeigned did it cleave unto the Lord, and embrace the measure of his life revealed inwardly to the mind! how did it fear! how did it wait! how did it watch against the

enemy, and cry to the Father for his help! How beautiful were the feet, and how pleasant the visitations of them, who brought the tidings of this life and peace! What love, what unity, what embracing one another in this life, was then witnessed in the hearts of one another! and where this lives and grows to this day, oh how precious is that vessel! but where the life in any is departed from, where another thing, of another nature, hath entered and been entertained by any, there it is not so; but there the love is grown cold, the mind changed, the goodness of the Lord forgotten, and the poor soul again entangled in that which formerly it felt some release and deliverance from.

Now that the enemy would endeavor to entangle the minds of the redeemed, and to draw them back from the Lord, and his pure measure of life in the heart, towards perdition again, that is not to be questioned; it being his nature and property so to do; and that he would use not only his strength, but also his subtlety and deceivableness to effect this (his aim being at the church and redeemed of God, more than at the world); appearing as an angel of light, in motions like light, in ways like life; this is not to be doubted of either; for how else could he gain upon that, whose eye is towards, and whose aim is after, the Lord? But this is the great thing for my heart, and the hearts of Friends, to be exercised in, to wait on the Lord in his true light, clearly to discern how far we have been assaulted by this enemy, and how far the Lord hath preserved us from his assaults, or suffered him to prevail upon us; for he hath prevailed in former ages, under the ministration of the law in the prophets' days, and under the ministration of the gospel in the apostles' days; yea, and I must needs say, he hath also prevailed in our days, on all that have not watched in the pure fear, and been preserved by the pure power of the Lord. Now doth it not concern every one to look up to the Lord, to guide his heart in searching, that he may truly understand his state? That, if he can witness the preservation of the power, he may sing praise to the power; but if he hath been betrayed, and come to a loss, he may seek af-

ter the power of life again, and wait for deliverance and restoring by it. For with the Lord God is mercy and bowels, and he seeketh after and saveth the lost, not once only, but again and again; only here is the great danger of souls, when they are ignorant of their captivity, and judge in themselves, and are guided by that which should be judged down and destroyed in them. When darkness is the light and leader in the mind, oh, whither doth that soul travel! How doth it judge, think, act! how sure doth the enemy hold it in his bonds and chains! how easily doth he prejudice it against that which is of God, and for its good, and incline it to think favorably of that which only appeareth to be of God, but is not, and is to its hurt!

Now, Friends, there were three things on my heart this morning, which sprang up in true sense and demonstration of God's Spirit, as subtle engines which the enemy hath endeavored to make use of to hurt our souls; which any that have been entangled in, have received hurt by, and those that have escaped have cause to bless the name of the preserver of Israel.

The first is this: By begetting in persons prejudices against those whom the Lord hath chosen, and pleaseth to make use of in ministering to his people. Precious is the ministry that is in the Spirit, for the building up in life, as well as for begetting. How doth the enemy strive to prejudice the world against them, that there may be no begetting to God from amongst them! And how doth he also endeavor to raise prejudices amongst the begotten, that he may interrupt, and, if possible, stop their building up.

The second is this: To draw men from eying and subjecting to the present dispensation, by an earnest looking after and waiting for another, or further. The security and blessing of the soul lies in the present dispensation, in bowing to God there, in being diligent under the exercises of his Spirit therein. Now that which draws the mind another way from the present exercise, from belief in the present gift, under a specious pretence of waiting for somewhat more glorious to appear, betrays and deceives,

in thus turning the mind out of the path which God holds forth and guides into, towards expectation of a path as yet to be revealed.

The third is this: Under a pretence of sticking to the enlightening and guidance of one's own measure, to set up a sense and judgment in the mind, both concerning persons, practices, and things, which is not truly of the measure, but secretly instilled into and raised up in the mind, contrary to the pure measure of life. All these have I not only seen in spirit, but been sorely assaulted with; and that they have not prevailed upon me even to destruction, is the tender mercy and kindness of the Lord unto me; and in that tenderness and love, for the preservation of others, do I write these things. And indeed I have somewhat in my heart to say singly and nakedly concerning each of these, which the Lord guide and bless to the conditions of those who stand in need thereof.

First, Concerning those prejudices which the enemy is apt to lay before the minds of Friends concerning those whom the Lord hath chosen to minister to them in the power of his truth, I shall say this: Look over the former dispensations of God; there were false prophets under the law, and false apostles and ministers in the time of that dispensation of the gospel, who did strive and labor hard to disturb, undermine and overturn the building and work of God in the spirits of his people then; but did God suffer the true prophets under the law, or the true apostles, to fall and lose their ministry? And is not this present dispensation pure and living, and able to preserve both the instructors and instructed in the Lord? It is natural to the enemy to suggest such a thing; but let all that fear the Lord, and love his truth, take heed how they entertain such a suggestion. Besides, he that hath felt the pure power in his heart, and waited to be carried through the work of it, and hath been carried through and brought into the dominion, and set as a pillar in the temple of the Lord, it is not easy, if possible, for him to fall, the Lord having undertaken for him, that he shall *go no more forth*,

as Rev. iii. 12. But let me say this to thee, O soul! whoever hast entertaned this prejudice, Thou, through prejudices and suggestions, judgest them fallen; but do not they, in the true eternal light of the Spirit of life, see thee fallen? Nay, if thou couldst but retire to the pure measure that at first quickened thee, mightest not thou feel thy own fall?

To the second, of drawing out the mind to look after another or further dispensation, I have this to say: Consider what this dispensation is; is it not of the seed itself? Is it not of the light, life, and power of the Father, manifested in the seed, and in the soul through the seed? Is not the sense quick, and the love pure, where this is felt? What wouldst thou have poor soul? Oh that thou feltest the virtue and power of this! surely thou wouldst then find that thou mightest sit down here in the peace, purity, power, dominion, and perfection of life; for it is all in the seed, and to be revealed to thee, and become thine, as thou art gathered into the seed, and the seed opened in thee. Besides, are there not many that have witnessed, and that can witness from God, that this is the dispensation which is to go through the whole earth? And shall it be laid aside in the beginning of its work? "If there had been a law given, which could have given life" (said the apostle) "righteousness should have been by the law." God doth not change. When he hath brought forth that which will do the thing, why should he change it? Now of the ability of this there are many witnesses; yea, it hath brought forth life and righteousness in those that have been subject to it, and was once owned as the desire of our souls, and became a covering to our eyes, that we could look no further; our hearts, in the sense and life of truth, being satisfied that this was the very thing we had long mourned after, and waited for. Oh! that which begets another sense in any of us (under what pretence or appearance soever), let it be the abomination of our souls, that we hearken not, nor give the least entertainment to it, lest by it we are betrayed of our portion in the blessed treasure and inheritance.

To the third I say: It is a standing truth, the standard

we were invited to, and to which we are to keep for ever, even the measure of life in our own vessels. This will justify us in our subjection to whatever it reveals; and its justifiication will stand, whatsoever any man else shall say to the contrary. But this is at unity in itself, and never opposeth the motion or appearance of life in another. Now this is certain, the enemy will appear as near life and its motion as he can; and if I receive his appearance, I am not subject to the measure of life in me, but to him under his deceitful appearance. Therefore if that which appears like life in thee contradict a practice or appearance of life in others (who were in the truth before thee, and are in the growth thereof far beyond thee), oughtest thou not to be sober in spirit, and to wait in fear, lest thou shouldst be deceived; lest thou shouldst exalt self and the enemy in thee, and not the truth; yea, lest thy heart should grow hard, and thy neck stiff, against those who are over thee in the Lord, and so thou lose the benefit of their watching over thee, and counsel to thee, and of God's preservation: for out of the truth, in the deceitful appearance, there is no preservation, nor true light, nor justification of life; but self-conceit, fleshly confidence, and the justification of a man's own spirit; and his wisdom then gets up, and exalts itself, as if it were the right thing. The Lord gave the measure of life to thee; and the Lord also hath given fathers, guides, instructors, watchmen in his Israel. These have a service from the Lord towards thee, who knoweth that thy soul hath need of that service: now if the enemy can prejudice thee against, and withdraw thee from, the use of what thou needest, art thou not in danger of falling and miscarriage? Dost not thou set up the measure of life in thee (if not another thing) beyond its place, state, and growth? And can any thing grow and thrive out of the order and wisdom of God? Nay, nay; the very measure of life itself will this way come to wither and die in thee, and another thing live in its place; and the sword of the Lord will be drawn against thee, and thou wilt be cut off from the body, and also from him who is the quickener and preserver of

the body. Therefore, my friends, as the enemy watcheth to deceive and destroy, so the Lord keep our souls in the true watch and looking up to him, who (to those that fear him) discovereth the deceit, and preserveth from the snare.

And this is witnessed concerning the measure of life in the heart, and the way of its acting and operation, that it always acts in its place, even in due subjection to the Father of spirits, and to his life in others according to its growth; for there is no rent nor division in the living body; no setting up one measure of life against another measure, or one motion of life against another motion, or one practice against another; but all there is in the unity, in the love, in the tenderness, in the sense, in the peace, in the dominion, in the subjection; and that which differeth or dissenteth from the life, interrupting the union and uniformity in the life, is not of the life; which when it is everywhere cast out, life to life will answer everywhere; which day my soul breatheth and waiteth for, even the day wherein life alone shall live and reign in every vessel, and all the devices and snares of the enemy not be able to enter upon or catch any of God's little simple-hearted ones; but still, by the power of life rising in clearness against them, be thrown back upon the enemy, to his torment and disadvantage.

And, O dear lambs! consider how easy it is for you to mistake, err, and wander from the truth; and do not refuse the care, watchfulness, and tender counsel of those who were instrumental to beget you to, and are yet over you, in the Lord. Alas! how easy is it for the enemy to deceive your simplicity, and get between you and your life; and then ye are liable to mis-see and mis-act in all ye do, and to follow the enemy, as if he were your right guide; and to fight against, and resist him, who is your true leader, as if he were your enemy! The life in you is to be your guide and leader, as it groweth up and receiveth ability, strength, and dominion from the Lord; but the heir is to be under tutors and governors, till the time appointed of the Father. And the seed is meek, humble, tender, lowly, sensible of its own state and weakness, and subject to the exaltation,

dominion, and pure authority of life in others, where the Lord hath so exalted it. That which is otherwise in you (which is high, exalted, conceited of itself, and not subject to every degree of life in others, according to its state) is another thing, which is not of the true kind, but only under a guise appears to you as the true; and as it gets entrance, corrupts your hearts from the true, and distils its poison into your spirits! which ye believing, entertaining, and feeding upon, as if it were the true, grow up in his poisonful nature, losing the pure nature and fellowship of the body, and are travelling whither ye are not aware; being gone from that which first gathered, into that which, through subtlety, hath deceived, appearing to you as if it was still the same, and that ye still keep to it, but others are departed: whereas the thing is clean contrary in the sight of the Lord, and in the sight of those who keep to the anointing, and see with his eye. Therefore, O dear lambs and babes! what need have we to wait in tender sense for the Lord's preservation of us in that nature, spirit, and life, whereof we were begotten, and wherein we were taught, that there we may still learn and keep to the true teaching, in the innocency and simplicity of love, and not hearken to the wisdom and reasonings of another spirit, who lieth at watch to catch the mind with his wiles, and draw from the true thing. Mark how we learned at first: was it not in a nature, by a secret instinct and inclination of our minds towards the life, and the path, ways, and practices thereof, whereinto the body, which before had been gathered, was led and walked before us? The same life, when it maketh us part of the flock, bringeth us into the same footsteps; and there we walk with them, in the unity of the same life, and sense of the same leader; but if the enemy can at any time draw us from this sense, and from the belief and practices or practice which we received in this sense, even out of the limits of this nature and its naturalness, how easy is it for him to persuade us to question right things in our minds and understandings, as if they were wrong (darkening our eye and causing us to overlook

and forget the leading and motion which we had in the true sense and nature from the anointing itself), and so confidently to think and conclude, that we took up such or such a practice by imitation, and have held it up in form. Whereas the Lord, who forgetteth not what and how he hath wrought in us, knoweth that we took it up in the sense and leading of his truth, and are now tempted from that in the reasoning subtlety, which we formerly practised in the true innocent simplicity. And thus getting into us a belief and entertainment of his snare, he draws us from that which at first led us, and from the practices we were at first led into, to hearken to him, and follow him, who instructeth us in a way we were not instructed in before while the Lord instructed us; and so destroyeth his nature, and the work of his Spirit in us, dividing us both from the head and living body; and so our standing, growth, sense, and judgment is altered, and we are neither to the Lord what we were before, nor is he to us what he was before; for he hates that spirit in all its appearances, and cannot have unity with the souls that are entangled by it. Therefore, dear friends, as we prize our gathering to, and abiding with, the Lord, and the enjoyment of his love, peace, joy, and presence at present, and the crown and inheritance of life with him for ever; so let us fear, so let us watch, so let us cry unto him, to be preserved by him, which gathered us in that into which he gathered, and not by any means be betrayed (through subtlety of the enemy) into another thing, where the life of the body (and union with the body) cannot possibly be witnessed, nor the true justification of the Lord; but only an appearing justification of a man's own spirit, which must afterwards come under condemnation. Ye, who are in the living and true sense, will feel my love, tenderness, and faithfulness in what I write; and ye who are not, the Lord God of bowels pity, and recover you out of the snare and wrong judgment, that ye may feel it; and feeling that which is true, may be joined to it, drinking of its virtue and preservation, and live; which is the earnest desire of my soul to the Lord, who am

Your brother and companion in the tribulation and mercies which attend the living,

ISAAC PENNINGTON.

From Aylesbury prison, the 14th of the Fifth month, 1666.

POSTSCRIPT.

DEAR friends, brethren, lambs, and plants of the Most High, it is in my heart to add one thing, which I have been deeply exercised about, and have received help from the Lord in, wherein I am truly willing, in faithfulness and tenderness, to be helpful to any of you that stand in need thereof, as the Lord shall give me ability and opportunity. It is this:—

Among other things, wherewith the enemy endeavoreth to reproach those whom the Lord hath sent forth among us, he maketh use of this, as if they wanted bowels and tenderness. Now, friends, I beseech you to consider it, that the enemy may not thus enter you. Did not the Lord consider of his work, and whom he sent forth in this his service and labor of love? Doth he not know the need of bowels and tenderness in them, and would he not especially furnish them therewith? Yea, have they not bowels from and in the Lord? And doth not the eye that is open see and acknowledge their bowels, and bless the Lord for them? I have lately been often warmed in the true sense of it, and have felt that therein I have not blessed his name in vain; but the thing is so in the sense of truth, and so acknowledged before the Lord in that which erreth not: only as true judgment and severity hath its proper place in the Lord, as well as his mercy, and is made use of by him towards his people, as all by experience know; so must it be in them also that bear his image; who must know, in his wisdom and authority, whom to smite with his rod and sharp reproofs, and when and whom to cherish in the tenderness and meltings of love. And this is also love and tenderness (and hath sweet and precious virtue and usefulness in it,

both for the recovery and restoring of those whose condition calls for the sharp stroke, and for the preservation of the rest), though it doth not so appear to that which by no means can endure the judgment, but would have the tenderness and mercy which belongs not to it; for the mercy is to be broken, to the humble, to the meek, to the afflicted, and bowed-down ones under the sense of judgment; not to the stiff and stubborn against the righteous judgments and testimonies of the Lord. And, my friends, consider, could the Lord carry on his glorious work in the hearts of his children without his judgments? Or can they who are sent by him possibly carry on his work among his people, without making use of his pruning-knife, to cut off that which sprouted out unnaturally and unseasonably, which (if it be let alone) will draw away the sap from that which should be fed and nourished with it? Dear friends, the Lord give you a true sense, that in his light, life, wisdom, and presence, ye may justify what is of him, discerning between things that differ; and not call any thing that is evil (as the tenderness which is out of him is) good; nor any thing that is good (as the judgment and severity which is of him is) evil; but may rightly distinguish between the nature of things, knowing every thing that is of God, and owning it in its place.

Aylesbury prison, the 29th of the
Sixth month, 1666.

ONE MORE

TENDER VISITATION

TO

THE MEN OF THIS GENERATION.

SENT TO THEM IN BOWELS OF LOVE AND TENDER COMPASSION, BEFORE THEIR DAY BE OVER.

Oh that those who read this might read with a right understanding, and have a true sense of what is here proposed for the good of their souls!

If there be a God, and if this God hath let down a principle of life from himself into the hearts of the sons of men, to gather them out of the world unto himself by; and if we have been directed to, and enlightened by, this principle, and have heard his voice, and been gathered to him in it, and therein have been taught his true spiritual worship, and drawn out of the worships, fashions, customs, and ways of the world, who are estranged from God, and walk in their own wisdom, satisfying the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind, and doing what is right in their own eyes,—I say, if it be indeed so with us, then that which any do against us, in this respect, they do against God. The risings of heart against us, the hard words and reproaches, the contriving to destroy or root us out of the land, the making and executing sharp laws against us, &c., all this, and whatever else is done against us on this occasion, must needs be done against him.

And what will this produce? Will it not also engage the wisdom and power of the Lord against you? He may let us suffer long, and let you be hardened against us, as if we

were not of God, by the slips and foolishness of such who have seemed to be of us, but have not kept to his truth; yet still those that keep to the Spirit and truth of God, are of God, and he is tender of them. And if he that touched Israel after the flesh, touched the apple of his eye, what doth he that toucheth his spiritual Israel? We are content and quiet under what the Lord suffers to befall us from you; but ye will find, in the end, it will not be well for you to deal so with us. The Lord hath a spiritual crown, dignity, and dominion in the hearts of many in this nation; why should he not enjoy it? Why should not men let him enjoy his heavenly rule, who giveth to them their earthly, and who can take it from them when he pleaseth? See Dan. iv. 32. and 35.

Therefore, my dear countrymen (and ye especially that are in authority), consider, oh consider before it be too late! I hope, I hope (though the provocations have been very great) that it is not yet too late for many of you to find a place of repentance and remission with the Lord. If ye can plead ignorance before the Lord, and that ye have not known what ye have done herein, he pitieth that, if ye yet hearken to his counsel and reproof, and return unto him. He hath power to destroy this nation; he hath power to do what he will in this nation. Oh! fear before him, and take heed of fighting against him before whom none can stand.

Alas! if ye knew what we were doing, while ye are afflicting and persecuting us for our subjection to the Lord, surely it could not but melt and overcome you; even how we have been mourning and wrestling many times with our God, in earnest prayers and supplications to him for you; not that we might escape your wrath (which he enableth us to bear), but that ye might escape his fury, and terrible indignation, which we know is ready to break forth, and that ye will not be able to bear it, when it doth break forth; but it will pursue, overtake, break to pieces, and scatter, and there will be none to deliver.

Are not these things serious? Are they not true? Are they not written in love? Why should they not take place

in you? Oh! come out of the circle and mist of darkness, that ye may see the truth of them. If ye be not in the nature of Christians, do not deceive yourselves, and provoke God, in taking the name unto you. If ye be true Christians, do not judge or walk as men, even in and according to the wisdom of the earthly principle; but feel that principle which is of God, and in that wait for, and learn to hear and know the voice of God, and that will lead (out of all profane ways, out of all superstitious ways, yea, out of all the ways that man's fallen wisdom hath taught and erred in) into the way of true and sound judgment, where the true reformation within will be witnessed by you, and the true reformation without brought forth through you (thus acting), and no separation or rent from you heard of by them that fear the Lord.

But till then, the principle of God, the life of God in the heart, the pure wisdom which is from above, cannot own that which is from below, in its fall, in its separation from the true; but must remain distinct from it, and a faithful witness against it. And I say again and again, in the love and fear of God unto you, take heed how ye persecute this in any, or any because of this: for it will lie more heavy upon you in the day of God's pleading with you, and executing his righteous judgments, than all your other sins. If ye have ears to hear, oh! hear, and cast up your accounts, making your peace with God before his wrath break forth against you like a flood, which none can stop.

Feel my love, and the meltings of my spirit for you before the Lord; and be not hardened against the truth, lest ye remember my words, and the warnings of many of the precious servants of the Lord, to the increase of your grief, and not to your benefit, in the day of your calamity.

By Isaac Penington.

Written in Aylesbury prison,
16th of 5th month, 1666.

CONCERNING

THE CHURCH:

OR OF

THE CHURCH STATE

UNDER

THE GOSPEL.

WHEREBY IT MAY APPEAR

What a miserable APOSTASY from the TRUTH hath overspread and covere the Earth for many Ages and Generations, and how gross and thick th Darkness yet lies upon it; though the Light of GOD, in his tenderMercy hath broke forth and shined upon the People of his gathering, an through them hath also visited the World.

The Guidance of this in my heart was particularly and chiefly towards th Papists; but I afterwards had a true sense that it also extended to th state of such Protestants as had not waited on the Lord, for him, in h wisdom and power, to rear up his own building, but had ventured t build of themselves, and so had reared up Churches in the same spirit o error, darkness, and apostasy, which they seemed to depart from: again all which the Lord will fight, and all which he will break down, in th day of the revelation of the glorious Light and Power of his Truth, whic will overcome, subdue, and reign over the earth; not after the manne of men, but in the heavenly dominion of his life.

Written in AYLESBURY Prison, about the middle of Sixth month, 166

BY ISAAC PENINGTON.

WHEREUNTO ARE ANNEXED SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THE ETERNAL JUDG MENT, AS IT IS EXPRESSED BY CHRIST, MAT. XXV. 31. TO THE END OF THE CHAPTER.

PREFACE.

Because the corruption of the Christian doctrine and worship hath been great (yea, indeed very great) since the days of the apostles; and the judgments also are to be very great, because of this corruption; even dreadful woes, plagues, cups of wrath, and thunders unutterable, as is expressed in the book of the Revelations; therefore, that men may avoid the terrible wrath of God, which is breaking and to break forth, by discerning and forsaking that which his wrath is against,—therefore, I say, in tender bowels was it in my heart to discover somewhat of that which the Lord hath made manifest to me (among many others) concerning the creeping in of this corrupt state, and its getting up after the days of the apostles, with its continuance to this day; that men and churches may consider their state, see their nakedness, and look after the pure garment; that they may be clothed with the Spirit of the Lord, and found in the righteousness thereof, that so they may stand boldly before him, when the transgressors and hypocrites (of all sorts) shall have their fig-leaf coverings ripped off, and lie open to the strokes of his indignation. And this I say to all: take heed of two things in this day of the Lord's love and vengeance; take heed of retaining or setting up any thing which the Lord is coming forth against; and take heed of slighting or appearing against that which the Lord is preparing to set up. The appearance of his Spirit, the shining of his day, is precious, even in the meanest glimmerings of it. Oh! who shall be guiltless before him, who defendeth or setteth up any thing of man's will or wisdom (his sun, moon, and stars, in all their glory, being to fall and lose their shining), or who debaseth the lowest appearance of his seed! And if the Jews suffered so deeply for refusing and despis-

ing Christ's appearance in the flesh, what will light on those who refuse and despise his appearance in Spirit? I know this, that Christians now overlook and slight this, as the Jews did that, and by the same snare, even by a prejudice they have drunk in, that this is contrary to the Scriptures, as the Jews then did conclude, that that coming of Christ then was not agreeable to, but different from, what the Scriptures had said concerning his coming. But what said Christ then? "Wisdom is justified of her children." They who then were of the spirit, and in the spirit, knew the voice of the bridegroom then. And such also know it now, and rejoice in it; though the wise in another wisdom (according to the Scriptures as they think) refuse and disdain it; and not knowing the righteousness of Christ in spirit, set up a righteousness of their own in the flesh: for their believing (and applying to themselves the righteousness of Christ) out of the true limits of life, according to their own apprehension of things, is no other. And this must fall. Man's knowledge of scriptures, the faith of man, through his own apprehensions, must fall, and man appear naked underneath, that the glorious righteousness of Christ in Spirit, and the precious covering thereof, may be magnified over all. And in this light of life, and newness of nature in Christ, runs the blood which cleanseth, and not elsewhere. It runs not according to men's notions, but in its own life, virtue, and power in the heart; where (where it is livingly felt) the iniquity is washed away, the sin is gone, the everlasting righteousness appears; yea, the water springs, which washeth and keepeth clean continually. Away with your notions, and empty husks, O several sorts of professors! come to the thing itself, or rather wait on the Lord to be led to it, that ye may feel the seed, the pure seed, the living seed, the Holy One of God, and may know its planting and growth in you, and your unclothing and emptying of all else, that ye may be clothed upon, and filled with it. And in the sense of it, and unity with it, ye will own and love what comes from it, and rejoice in all the springings of its light, either within or without.

OF THE CHURCH STATE UNDER THE GOSPEL.

THE Jews' church state under the law was precious; who, walking with God according to the covenant of the law, were an holy people, nigh and dear unto God above all other people. But they provoked him so continually and grievously, that instead of blessings, they drew plagues upon themselves, and were, at last, by his righteous judgments, made desolate, and cut off from being any longer his select nation and people.

The church state of the Christians under the gospel is much more precious and glorious, they being gathered into the substance of that, whereof the Jews' state had but the shadow. The presence of God, the manifestation of his life and power is more inward and bright among them; their union with him more close, their communion and joy more full, he tabernacling among them, dwelling and walking with them, and advancing them into the state of sons and daughters; whereas the law state was but a state of servitude. And their standing also is more firm; the covenant wherein they stand being more able to hold them together with God than the other was. The standing of the other was by the works of the law, which they were to observe and live. The standing of these is in the faith, which is from the power, which worketh their works in them and for them.

Yet, as they are gathered in the faith, so their standing is in the faith, and out of it they cannot be preserved. So that (before they are established) there is a possibility of their fall from the faith, wherein their standing is, and from

the power which preserveth. And if they so fall, they are liable to be cut off, as the Jews were, as their apostle tells them. Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22. In the fear, in the humility before the Lord, in keeping to the faith, their safety is; but if they become high-minded, because of their state and church privileges; if they think their standing so sure, as that they are out of the danger of falling, then they are out of the fear, out of the humility, out of the faith which preserves; and being out of the preservation, must needs fall, and so continuing, must needs be cut off.

Now the same apostle doth not only warn them to take heed of falling from the faith, but afterwards expressly foretells of a falling away, even that there must come such a thing amongst them also; yea, and of such a falling away from the truth and power of life, as should give antichrist advantage to get into God's temple, and sit there as God, taking upon him the power and authority, as if he had the true power and authority of God. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. And what doth he then? Doth he not corrupt all, even as God's power and presence purifies and preserves all? And as he shows himself as God, so doth he not also show forth his church as God's church? Yea, it goes on in the world as God's. All that drink of his spouse's cup take it to be so; who are very many and great ones, even kings and inhabitants of the earth, peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, Rev. xvii. 2. 15. and chap. xviii. 3. and none are able to discern that it is not so, but those that are anointed with the true eye-salve, which giveth to see through his deceits. 1 John ii. 20. For he cometh "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" 1 Thess. ii. 9, 10. he maketh the church (after he hath got possession of it, and made it his, sitting as God in it) appear as like the true church as possibly he can, that he may hold up his mystery of deceit in the world, which if once discerned, would soon fall, and come to nothing. 2 Thess. ii. 7. Rev. xvii. 5.

To open these things a little more fully and further from the Scriptures, that they who yet cannot read otherwise may read them there, and come in some measure to the acknowl-

edgment of the truth, and wait for the power from on high, from whence is the true faith (wherein is the true church and its standing), for want of which the world is become a wilderness; full indeed of profession, but very empty of the nature and life of Christianity.

Christ tells his disciples, that false christs and false prophets should come, and deceive many; yea, that they should prevail so far as, if it were possible, to deceive the very elect. Matt. vii. 15. and chap. xxiv. 11. 24. The Lord God hath sent forth his truth, and now after it he suffers to go forth a power of deceit, a mighty power, even having all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness in it. 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, 11. And it works according to its power, it gathers all its own everywhere. Not one, but he that is of the elect seed, can stand before it. Now the reason why God suffered this to go forth, was in judgment. Men had dallied with the truth, taken up a form of godliness, and rejected the power; therefore God withdraws from the form, and suffers the unclean spirit to enter it, and the uncircumcised nature of man to shelter itself there. It arose also from the devil's subtlety, who, finding himself dispossessing of his kingdom, played this master-piece, both to save what he could at present, and to recover the rest again in process of time. He (in his apostles and ministers) takes upon him the profession of Christianity, sending them forth as the ministers of righteousness; 2 Cor. xi. 13. 15. but for all that, they were still of the worldly nature, of the worldly root, spirit, and principle; and so by them he brings forth Christianity (or the profession and observation of the Christian religion) in such a way as would please the worldly mind and nature; and bringing it forth so, he gathers to him all that were not gathered and preserved by the power, and so becomes the greater body and church in view, and the rest (as to the outwardness of their church state) are fain to give way, and retire into the power, out of their former place and station in the world. Rev. xii.

Now as Christ had said that false christs and false prophets should come; so John said they were come; 1 John ii.

18. and also showed from whence they came, "They went out from us." ver. 19. They were such as came into the form among us, but were not begotten of the life, nor subject to the power with us. And there were many of them, chap. iv. 1. and such they were as had a great power of deceit, and came therewith to seduce them. 1 John ii. 26. Therefore he bids them, in the unction which they had received, ver. 27. which searcheth and discerneth all, "try the spirits." If their spirit (or the spirit that is in them) confess Christ (who is the power of the endless life, the sum, substance, and end of all that which shadowed forth life), they are of God. chap. iv. 2. But if their spirit confess not Christ come in the flesh, though they may seem ever so much to preach him, they are not of God. ver. 3. Now whose spirit confesseth Christ? Surely his only that is subject to him. He that preacheth Christ in words, and denieth him in works, whose works are not wrought in Christ, nor brought forth by Christ, his confession is but outward, but formal; it is no true confession. It is but the confession of his mouth, not of his spirit; and he is, in the sight of God, not a confessor, but a denier, of him: and whoso is enabled by God to try spirits, and waiteth in his light and anointing to try such, findeth him to be so, and notwithstanding all his fair words and speeches of Christ, and his pretending to be his minister. Rev. ii. 2. For men with fine words, and fair speeches may deceive the hearts of the simple; but they cannot deceive those to whom God giveth ability to try spirits. Could the devil deceive Christ, when he said "Thou art the son of God"? No; Christ knew his spirit to be against him, notwithstanding those words. And can the ministers of antichrist deceive the elect of God, when they preach up Christ, in words, to be the Saviour and Redeemer, and yet own not that life and power which saves, but persecute it wherever they find it? No; the same Spirit of Christ in them discerneth quite through their words to their spirit. "My sheep," saith Christ, "hear my voice." John x. 27. Man may be deceived, and caught in the snare; but the elect, the sheep, know the

voice of the Shepherd from the voice of the stranger. If the stranger say, Christ is the Son of God; though he believes, and owns the thing, yet they receive it not from his mouth. Well; whence are these false prophets and false christs? "They are of the world." That is their root. Thence they come. They are of the worldly spirit, the worldly wisdom, the worldly nature, only clothed outwardly with a profession and show of the doctrine and practices of Christ and his apostles. And what do they do? "They preach worldly things." They suit their doctrine to the worldly nature, principle, and spirit. And what is their success? "The world heareth them." 1 John iv. 5. The earthly wisdom in man falls in with them, judges them to be right, owns them, sets up their way of Christianity and worship in the world; and thus the world become Christians. Those which came in the name of Christ, the world could not receive. ("He that knoweth God heareth us;" not the world. 1. John iv. 6.) There were but a few, in comparison, gathered here and there then; a few in one place, a few in another. The doctrine that comes forth in the power scatters the worldly part. Man's wisdom, man's nature, cannot receive it, in the love and life of it. But when these false christs and false prophets come, the world can turn Christians; then a whole city, or a whole nation, can presently become a church. Why so? These come in that which the world can receive, which their wisdom can answer, fall in with, and subject to. These can bring forth a cross, which the world can like, fall down, and worship; but the cross of Christ they cannot; for that crucifies and slays the worldly nature, wherever it is felt, taken up, and subjected to. The way of life is strait and narrow, and few there be that can walk therein; but a broader way more may walk in. The true church is not easily found or entered into; but the false is wider and far larger; yea, desirable to the flesh. The true church is circumspect, will admit none but in the way of God's wisdom and power; but the false church prostitutes and thrusts herself upon all. She meets men in the streets, and forceth them into her

bed; whereas the voice of the true church is, wait for the preparation, for the being changed by that which giveth entrance into the truth; for the builder of the church is God, Heb. iii. 4. (he builds this house by Christ, ver. 6. as by Moses he built the house under the law) and he is the ladder to the building. Acts ii. 47.

So Paul also, writing to Timothy, tells him of perilous times in the last days. 2 Tim. iii. 1. For when the last days come, and the antichrists and false prophets appear, then men are in great danger of being deceived, and of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Then he that is not in the truth, but only in the form and outward appearance, will be swallowed up by the deceit, and take up his dwelling in the form without the power; for so saith the apostle concerning them, ver. 5. they have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it. And all manner of wickedness will shelter itself under this form; *Self-love, covetousness, boastings, pride, blasphemy, disobedience to parents, unthankfulness, unholiness, &c.*, ver. 2, 3, 4. and indeed what not? For what is so evil, which cannot shelter itself under that form of religion and profession, where there is not the true power and life of religion to resist and subdue it?

Now mark; When these antichrists and false prophets had got up into a body and strength, gaining authority and credit in the world, what did they then do, but endeavor wholly to crush and suppress the truth, with those that abode still in it? Then the dragon, with his angels, fighteth with Michael and his angels. They had still been fighting with the apostles and ministers of Christ, endeavoring to disparage them, and eat out their esteem in the churches, as 2 Cor. xi. but they could not prevail; Satan, in all his enterprises, fell down, like lightening, before the glory and power of Christ in his apostles and ministers. But when the apostasy increased, and the churches provoked their preserver, growing cold in love, and faint in faith (being lifted up with their gifts, thinking highly of themselves, and their standing to be firm), and many received not the love of the truth, but only a profession of it for by-ends, &c.,

then the Lord began to threaten some with the removal of their candlestick, and did afterwards proceed in judgment, even to let the false prophets and antichrist prevail, and strong delusions enter, that they who had dallied with the truth, might be frustrated of the salvation they expected by it, meeting with a lie (which destroyeth) in the stead of it. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12. And so God, who before built up, in his jealousy and indignation afterwards threw down men abiding not in the faith, nor in the power, but in the form and outward profession, which (separated from the power) the Lord abhorreth. What he loves, he secures for himself (his holy temple, his holy altar, his spiritual worshippers); and what he regarded not (which was the form and outward ordinances, now polluted) he gave to the heathenishly-professing spirit; and there they worship, and magnify their own state, prizing it by its outward glory and appearance, and not by a right sense and knowledge of it in the truth. Read these things outwardly, in the letter (or rather wait upon God that ye may read them, who caused them to be written to that end, to be read and understood), Rev. xii. and chap. xi. 1, 2. where the battle of the dragon is related, and God's taking down his building, and disposing of it according to his pleasure.

Again mark; Antichrist gets into the temple (upon the falling away), sits there as God, ruling, giving laws, and exacting obedience in the name of God: but when was this to be? In the last times, 1 Tim. iv. 1. (which would be very perilous, through the power of wickedness and deceit, then getting up). When did those times begin? They began in the apostles' days. The mystery of iniquity was then at work. 2 Thess. ii. 7. Yea, saith John, "it is the last time;" by the coming of the antichrists and deceivers we know it to be so. 1 John ii. 18. Christ said, they should come; John said, they are come; Paul saw them then at work in the mysterious power of darkness. But they could not carry their work through, the Spirit and power of Christ in his apostles stood so much in the way; but after they were removed out of the way, antichrist got up his mystery

of deceit apace. Well, how long doth he reign? Even till the very coming of Christ in his Spirit and power; yea, there is some remainder of him till the very brightness of his coming. 2. Thess. ii. 8. This mystery of iniquity hath power and authority over all the wisdom of man; but the appearance of Christ, in the spirits of his people, hath power over it, and tormenteth it, by opening its nakedness, and causing its darkness to appear; and the brightness of his coming shall quite dissolve and scatter it. For it is but a mist of darkness, it hath no being in the truth, nor can it stand before the truth. So Babylon is found standing at the very last; just before the breaking forth and coming down of the New Jerusalem, and the marriage of the Lamb with his bride. Rev. xix. 6, 7. What is Babylon? A mystery of iniquity, in a form of godliness. A profession, a people, a religion, that seem to set up Christ; but set up another nature, spirit, and power in his stead. A church that is not of God, not formed in his divine wisdom, not brought forth in his light and power, and in the season of his will; but of man, and by man, that can go no further in religion than the number of a man. Zion, under the gospel, is not literal, but mystical; and so is Babylon also, who is the mother of fornications, who teacheth her daughters to adulterate from the life and from the power, who never knew the marriage of the Lamb in his Spirit, nor his pure bed of life, but enter into the chambers and bed of a strange spirit.

Quest. But what is the state of the church all this while, from this hour of corruption, till the coming of Christ in his Spirit and power?

Ans. A state of desolation, a state of widowhood, a wilderness state; where her living body is not discerned by the vulturous eye; but her children, whenever they appear witnessing for her, are persecuted, hunted, afflicted, and sometimes slain. This bloody church, which comes from the red dragon, and rules in his spirit and nature, drinks the blood of the lambs and martyrs of JESUS, who, in their several ages, are his faithful witnesses, and love not their lives unto

the death. And here the truth, and that which hath appeared of the true church in the world, for ages and generations (ever since this night of the dragon's and antichrist's darkness, and his sitting in the temple under an appearance of light), hath only been to be found, even among the persecuted ones, who have been dear to God; of whom the professing world hath not been worthy, no, not at all, of that heavenly life, spirit, and power, which dwelt in them, and through which they have been able to testify for the truth, and bear up their heads against the malice and persecutions of their enemies. Rev. xii. 11, 17, &c., and chap. xi. 3, 7. chap. xiii. 15, 16, 17. chap. xiv. 12. chap. xvii. 6.

Now, for a close: There are a few questions in my heart, briefly to propound and answer, which it may please God to reach forth to his witness in such, who, in distrust of themselves and their own wisdom, shall wait upon him for understanding. The questions are these. First, What a true church is? Secondly, How a true church may be known? Thirdly, How a true church may continue so? Fourthly, How a church may lose its state and being? Fifthly, When a church hath lost its state and being?

Quest. 1. What is a true church?

Ans. A true church is a truly spiritual body, gathered out of the world, or worldly nature and spirit, into God's Spirit and nature, there to live and walk with him, and worship him in spirit and truth, and for him to tabernacle in and walk among, and fill with his glorious presence and powerful life. Eph. ii. 21, 22. 1 Pet. ii. 5. John iv. 23. 2 Cor. vi. 16. It is not the profession of the truth makes a true believer; nor is it a company of professors makes a true church; but their proceeding from, and union with, the truth itself; and their abiding in the life and power of that which they profess. Eph. iv. 16.

Quest. 2. How may a true church be known?

Ans. There must be somewhat in man to know them, and somewhat in them to be known by. That in man which knows them, must be somewhat of God in him; for that which is of man cannot measure or judge of the things

of God. As the worldly wisdom and spirit could not know Christ formerly; so neither now can it know his church. Many may appear to be churches of Christ, and yet not be so; and that which is so, may not appear so. In this case, who shall distinguish? Not he that judgeth according to the appearance, but he that judgeth the righteous judgment. Therefore it is not for every man to take upon him to judge which is the true church; but first to wait upon God to be led into that, and in some measure born of that, which giveth ability to judge. "Wisdom is justified of her children;" but of others she is condemned for foolishness, and the foolishness justified in her stead.

And there is also somewhat for the church to be known by, which is that which distinguisheth her from all other assemblies and gatherings; which is the nature, life, and presence of the head with her and in her. This none hath, but the true church, the gathered body, the separate body of the Lamb, which is of his flesh, and of his bones. Eph. v. 29, 30. Her husband is with her, his life is in her: for she is a living body, or gathering of living stones. So that find the true life of the Lamb anywhere, there is somewhat of his church; find a gathering in his life, name, and power, there is his church, and he also. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20.

Quest. 3. How may a true church continue so?

Ans. By abiding in the Spirit, life, and power, that gathered and built them up into a church. This first gave them their being; and this still preserves them in their being, if they abide till they be perfected and established; but falling or being cut off from this, they wither, die, and come to nothing. Even as a disciple, departing out of the vine, making shipwreck of the faith, loseth that which made him a disciple or Christian; John xv. 6. so a church, departing from the Spirit and life of what they profess, languish by degrees, even till their life be wholly extinct, and they wholly lose that state and being which they had by their gathering. Thus the churches in Asia, beginning to

corrupt, grew formal, lukewarm, dead, &c., were warned to repent and strengthen that which remained, lest they were spewed out, the candlestick removed, &c. Rev. second and third chapters.

Quest. 4. How may a church lose its state and being?

Ans. Several ways; as first, By departing from the truth and simplicity of the gospel; letting in doctrines, principles, observations, customs, and practices, which are not of the pure Spirit, nor in the unity of it; but from the corrupt spirit, and which corrupt the minds of them that are entangled in them. Corrupt doctrines, corrupt principles, corrupt practices, &c., they all have of the nature and poison of death in them; and as they prevail, they bring death upon, and engage God against, that person or church where they get dominion. See what danger one corrupt doctrine of the Nicolaitans brought the Church of Pergamos into, even of God's coming forth with his sword and fighting against her. Rev. ii. 16. And if God, who is the defender of his church, himself fight against her, how shall she stand?

2. By negligence and sluggishness in the truth; by this means also life may languish and extinguish by degrees, even till death come wholly over and swallow it up. Rev. iii. 1, 2, 3. If the first love do but abate and wax cold, iniquity will be abounding, Matt. xxiv. 12. and the church will be in danger of losing its candlestick. Rev. ii. 4, 5.

3. By God's withdrawing his presence and power, for these or such causes abovesaid, which nourisheth and preserveth. For the life of the church, as well as of a disciple, is fed and nourished from the fountain or vine; and if it miss of the nourishment, its life cannot long continue. The Jews may keep up their sacrifices, and reading of the law; but yet they are a dead people to God, after their cutting off from the olive-tree. And the Gentiles may worship in the outward court, and keep up the outward ordinances, after God's rejecting and cutting them off also, and be as dead to God therein, as the Jews in theirs. Rev. xi. 1, 2. and Rom. xi. 21, 22.

4. By their listening and yielding to the power of the enemy, who quickly deceiveth (with his lies, instead of the truth), destroyeth, and layeth waste such buildings, where God in his just judgment letteth him forth upon them. For the gates of hell will prevail against that building, which the arm of Christ is not stretched forth (or ceaseth) to defend. And as the defence of every particular building upon the rock, is in its abiding there, and subjecting to the head: so the defence of larger gatherings or churches, is no otherwise. As their union and gathering is, so is their standing: to wit, in believing and giving up to their leader; hearkening to his voice, and obeying him only. But if they hearken to a stranger, if they hear another voice than his, if they follow another spirit, letting in his lies and deceit, they cannot keep their standing in the truth; but in so doing depart from it, and lose the promise and protection of it. For as before, by God's gathering them from the spirit of darkness, they became his, and met with his power, presence, and blessing; so afterwards being again, by any subtlety of deceit, gathered from the truth itself, into some likeness and appearance of it, which the enemy hath formed, they become the enemy's synagogue, not God's church; into which he entereth again, and dwelleth there, in that likeness and appearance. And this house, which was once cleansed, swept, and garnished by God, being again recovered and repossessed by the enemy, becomes worse, and more filthy in the nature of wickedness, than it was before. What is more pure, glorious, and excellent, than a true church of God, which is sanctified by his Spirit, and holds forth the virtues and pure nature of his life in the world? What is more filthy and abominable, and where doth Satan more strongly dwell and act, than in that which pretends to be a church, and is not? The promises of God are only to the seed absolutely; but not so to any man, or society of men, but as, in the tender mercy of the Lord, they are gathered into, and preserved in, the seed, in the way that the Lord hath chosen and appointed. For the way of life is glorious and perfect, and the Lord will honor it; so that those that expect to

reap salvation from him, must walk and abide with him therein; for besides him there is no Saviour; and besides his way, there is no way of salvation, either for any man or church.

Quest. 5. When hath a church lost its state and being?

Ans. When its nature is changed; when it is overcome by, and gathered into, another power and spirit, than it was first gathered into by the Lord; when its standing is not in the Spirit, nor after the Spirit, but in the flesh, and after the flesh; when its ways are carnal, its weapons carnal; when its hedge or wall is broken down, and the spirit of the world not kept out, but entered into it, and become one with it. Then it is no longer of God, and separate from the world; but one in nature, state, and being with the world. Rev. ii. 9.

These things are written in the love and good-will of God, that men may see that spirit, which hath bewitched and entangled them from him, with the ways and false appearances wherein it hath entangled them; and may wait on the Lord (in truth of heart) for his light, guidance, and power to deliver them; that so they may come into his holy land, and within the limits of his holy city, out of all polluted lands and buildings, where his holy nature dwelleth not, and the pure dominion of his holy life and power is not felt; that they may sing praise to him among his redeemed ones, for his precious redemption; who is breaking the bonds of captivity, and redeeming his out of all the lands and countries, wherein they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day; glory in the highest to his name for evermore!

SOME QUERIES TO THE PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY, TO PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY FOR THEIR GOOD.

Query 1. HAVE ye eat of the bread and drank of the wine in the Father's kingdom, which they that have received the kingdom, and are in the kingdom, eat and drink of?

Query 2. Have ye known the heavenly Jerusalem, and are ye come to it, as the Christians were in the apostles' days? Heb. xii. 22.

Query 3. Are ye in him that is true, and your churches and gatherings in God, and in the name of his Son? Is your being and dwelling in the eternal life?

Query 4. Have ye received the promise of the Father, even the excellent Spirit of the Son?

Query 5. Have ye the true faith? Do the living waters spring out of your bowels, according as the Scriptures have said? "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John vii. 38. and chap. iv. 14.

Query 6. Doth God tabernacle in you? is his dwelling among you? doth he walk up and down in your spirits, and sup with you, and you with him?

Query 7. Are ye in the new covenant? taught of God, so as you need no man to teach you? and your sins so blotted out, according to the covenant, as to hinder no good things from you?

These things were spoken of in the law and prophets, to be fulfilled, witnessed, and enjoyed under the power and life of the gospel; which is not a state of the names and foretelling of things, as under the law, but of the presence and enjoyment of the things themselves; and so far as ye fall short of them, ye shall fall short of the state of Christianity.

SOME

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

ETERNAL JUDGMENT,

AS IT IS EXPRESSED BY CHRIST, MATTHEW XXV. 31. TO THE END OF THE CHAPTER.

Obs. 1. THE condition of Christ here in this world, in many of his members in their several ages and generations. He is *hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison;* yea, indeed, what is there of misery, shame, and reproach, which he is not exposed to; or which they are not exposed to, who entertain him as their Lord and King, and are faithful in their obedience and subjection to him? ver. 35, 36. 43.

Obs. 2. The notice Christ takes of what is done in this kind, or not done in this kind, to any of his suffering members; which extends to all, even the very least. "Insomuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." ver. 40. "Insomuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." ver. 45.

Obs. 3. The honorable esteem Christ hath of his poor suffering members, with what eye of contempt soever the world looks upon them, yet he looks upon them as his brethren. ver. 40.

Obs. 4. The different carriages of persons towards Christ, in this his low condition in his members. Some gave him meat, some gave him drink; some took him in, some clothed him, some visited and came unto him; ver. 35, 36. others did none of these things unto him. ver. 43.

Obs. 5. The different judgment Christ passeth upon these, according to their different carriages. The one he pro-

nounceth *blessed of his Father*, judging them to the inheritance of a kingdom of eternal life. ver. 34. 46. The other he pronounceth *cursed*, and adjudgeth to everlasting punishment in the fire of his wrath. ver. 41.—46.

Obs. 6. The ground or reason why those, who did not minister to him, neglected him, which was their ignorance of him. They saw indeed, and knew several persons to be in such kind of conditions, but they did not know that it was Christ which suffered in them; this is implied in their answer to him. ver. 44. "When saw we thee ahungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" ver. 45.

Obs. 7. That it will not excuse men from the judgment, their not knowing of Christ in his members; but if they neglect and have not done this thing, though they may plead ever so strongly that they did not know any such, they will incur and must suffer the judgment. The Jews cried up Moses and the prophets, which had been before, and yet persecuted Christ and his apostles; and many now cry up the prophets, and Christ's appearance in a body of flesh, with his death, resurrection, ascension, &c., and also the apostles, both their words and practices; and yet persecute him, and the same practices, in his present servants and members. How will these possibly escape this judgment?

Obj. But they that did minister unto him, they knew not that it was he either, as ver. 37, 38, 39. Therefore they doing of it ignorantly (as we may say), it seemeth to want its due weight, and not to render them so worthy of the reward, as if they had done it in a clear and distinct understanding.

Ans. They did not know it so as to put so great a value upon it as Christ here doth; but they knew that they had done things of this kind, and that they had done them on Christ's account. But that Christ was so in those to whom they did them, as he now speaks; and that he would set so high an esteem on it, that they were not aware of. Was it thou thyself that wast naked, sick, in prison, &c., and didst

take all this as done to thee? This is wonderful to us, that thou shouldst so set by what we poor worms did to thy suffering saints, in thy name and fear.

Quest. But why doth Christ make this the ground of the general and universal judgment? Men have committed many other sins (some of which are in appearance far greater): why doth Christ mention none of them, but fix the judgment only upon this?

Ans. Surely because this is more in his eye, and more hateful to him than them all. This argues an evil nature and spirit, and the joining of the mind to the wicked one, more than them all. For it plainly shows, that there is none of the love and nature of Christ in such persons; for if there be of the love and nature of Christ in any person, it will incline his heart towards those which are Christ's, and especially in their suffering conditions. He therefore that hath no sense of those that belong to Christ, in their suffering conditions, showeth plainly, that he hath none of Christ's nature in him, and so is not at all found in that which Christ comes to save, but in that which he comes to judge and destroy for ever.

Now I have three questions more to propose, which I desire that all men that read may judge of in that which giveth the true sense and judgment of their weight.

1. If this be the cause and ground of the eternal judgment, whether it may not also be the ground of temporal judgments on persons and nations; to wit, if there be such a thing to be found in them, as neglecting to minister to Christ in his suffering members?

2. If there be not only this to be found, but also a causing of him in his members thus to suffer (a causing of their hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, imprisonment, &c.), whether this is not of very great force to draw down plagues, judgments, and miseries upon a nation?

3. If there have been such sins committed, God's anger provoked, and his judgments drawn down, whether it be possible to stop them, or there can be any reasonable hope of the diverting of them, without a deep humbling before

God, confessing the thing in the sight of the world (as it hath been done in the sight of the world), and laying such a foundation for the future, as the Lord and men may be satisfied and assured that no such thing shall be done any more? Was it not a shameful thing, that Jerusalem, the outward holy city (and chief, if not only professing people of the world), should stone, cast out, persecute, put to death, &c. the prophets and Christ of God, and set up priests and prophets of their own? And where, and by whom, are the witnesses and martyrs hunted and slain? Is it not still in that which is called the *Christian world?* Do not they strive (each sort) for their forms, persecuting the life and power, and those which follow the Lamb therein, out of their forms, from which his life and spirit calleth and gathereth? Oh that the world were awakened! Oh that this nation were awakened! Have there not been judgments enough to awaken it? Oh, do not dally! ye have God to deal with, who hath brought his truth and people upon the stage; who is arisen against the darkness (which hath long possessed the hearts of men, and held his people in captivity under their corrupt wills and wisdom), and to bind down sin and iniquity in men. Oh! do not say, "Let us break their bonds in sunder, and cast away their cords from us;" but rather let every one be willing to be found by the pure light of God, by that which is holy of God in him (from the king that sits upon the throne, even to the very beggar on the dunghill); that iniquity may be purged out of the hearts of men, and they become, not a vainly professing nation, but indeed a holy nation to the Lord; that peace and righteousness, love and mercy, yea, sweet and tender bowels may dwell within it, and flow up and down in all its borders; to the glory of God's truth, which is able to work this (were it but let in, received, and subjected to in the minds of men), and to the delight and joy of the hearts of all in the nation.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Written in Aylesbury prison, the 20th of the Eighth month, 1666.

CONCERNING

THE SUM OR SUBSTANCE OF OUR RELIGION,

WHO ARE CALLED QUAKERS,

AND THE EXERCISES AND TRAVAILS OF OUR SPIRITS THEREIN.

THIS is the sum or substance of our religion; to wit, to feel and discern the two seeds: the seed of enmity, the seed of love; the seed of the flesh, the seed of the Spirit; the seed of Hagar, the seed of Sarah; the seed of the Egyptian womb, the holy seed of Israel; and to feel the judgments of God administered to the one of these, till it be brought into bondage and death; and the other raised up in the love and mercy of the Lord to live in us, and our souls gathered into it, to live to God in it.

Now when the light of God's holy Spirit breaketh in upon man, and his quickening virtue is felt; then life enters into that which was slain, and there is a desire begotten in the heart to travel out of the Egyptian state, into the good land; that the soul, which came from God, might return back again to him, out of the sinful, wandering, miserable, lost estate, and might live and walk with him, in the purity, virtue, and power of his own life and spirit.

But then the other birth strives for its life, and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, takes part with his Egyptians against Israel; and there is no help to the poor soul, but as God pours out his judgments upon that hard nature and spirit in man, which is of the birth of the flesh, and receives the influences and strength of its father, which harden it against the true seed. And now what a condition is this poor soul in? The light of God's Spirit giveth it the sense of its state, and the quickenings of life make it sensible of its bondage. There are also some desires and longings after deliverance;

but this doth but provoke the enemy; and the soul being yet in his territories, and under his power, he dealeth the more hardly with it, increasing its burdens and oppressions daily. And oh, the outcries of the soul in this state! how is its spirit pained, anguished, and vexed within it; so that it could almost many times choose rather to lie still in Egypt, than undergo the heavy burdens, oppressions, fears, and dangers, that it daily meets with in this state!

Yet there is a secret hope springing up in the heart from the true seed, which often encourageth it to trust him, and wait upon him who hath visited, in his pure ministration of judgment. For this is felt many times, as the soul is made truly sensible by the Lord, that the judgment is not to the seed,—not to Israel; but to Pharaoh and his Egyptians: and by every stroke of God's wrath upon them, the seed is eased, and its deliverance working out.

And so at last when the judgment is finished in the land of Egypt, the strength of Pharaoh and his Egyptians broken, their first-born slain, out comes Israel, out of the dark land, out of the house of bondage, to travel towards its resting place. Then the paschal Lamb is known and fed on; yea, it is because of the blood of the Lamb, sprinkled upon the door-posts, that Israel is passed over and saved, in the day of Egypt's visitation. Oh! who can read truly, that hath not felt and been a living witness thereof?

But now, when the seed is come out of Egypt, there is not the end, but rather the beginning of its travels. Pharaoh and his Egyptians, with their horses and chariots, may pursue again and even overtake; and there may seem no way of escape or help to the soul, but only to stand still, hope in the Lord, and wait to see his salvation. Then shall the sea be divided, which stopped Israel's course, and Pharaoh with his Egyptians (the enemies of the soul in this appearance of dreadful oppressing power) be destroyed and seen no more.

Yet in the wilderness, in the passage through the entanglements to the holy land, there are many straits, trials, and sore enemies to be met with, who will strive by open force, and also with enchantments, to betray Israel; yea, there is

a part yet unbrought down, yet unwrought out, at which they will be striving to enter the mind. And as Israel forgets his God, walking out of his counsel, hearkening to that which his ear should be shut against, and so joining to the contrary seed; the plagues, the judgments, the indignation, and woe will be felt by him, and many carcases may fall there. So that there may be a great outcry in the heart, *Who can stand before this holy Lord God? Shall we be consuming with dying?* Yea, there is somewhat must be consumed with dying. Yea, if a man came so far as to witness dominion and victory over his soul's enemies, the evil seed brought into death in him, and a possession and inheritance in the pure rest of life; yet if that part be not kept in the death, if there be not a praying and watching to the preserver of Israel (in the pure fear and humility), the enemy will be sowing to the flesh again; he will be getting some of his corrupt seeds into the heart again (if the soul do but sleep and become negligent), and so corruption will take root again, and the contrary birth grow up again, and the foxes break into the vineyard, and spoil the tender grapes.

So that this is our religion, to witness the two seeds, with the power of the Lord bringing down the one, and bringing up the other; and then to witness and experience daily the same power, keeping the one in death, and the other in life, by the holy ministration of God's pure living covenant. And so to know God in this covenant, (in this covenant which lives, gives life, and keeps in life) and to walk with God, and worship and serve him therein, even in his Son, in the light of his Son, in the life of his Son, in the virtue and ability which flows from his Son, into our spirits; this is our religion, which the Lord our God, in his tender mercy, hath bestowed upon us. And indeed we find this to be a pure, living, and undefiled religion before God, daily witnessing his acceptance of it in and through his Son, whose name is here known and confessed, worshipped and honored, according to the very heart of the Father.

This may be further illustrated, and perhaps made more manifest to some, by a scripture or two.

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other," saith the apostle. Gal. v. 17.

Here are the two seeds (the seed of the serpent, the seed of the woman) whose striving and fight is in man, when God awakens the soul; the one whereof hath a nature, a desire, or lust contrary to the other. Now as the one of these prevails in any heart, so the other goes down. As the one gains life and power, so the other is brought into death and captivity. So that this is it every one is to wait for, after they once come to the sensible knowledge and experience of these two, to feel the flesh brought down, the lusts of it denied, the judgments of the Lord administered to it; that so the other may come up to live, thrive, and prevail in the soul, and so the soul witness salvation and redemption under its shadow. "Thus Zion is redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." Isaiah i. 27. What is Zion? Is it not the holy hill of God, whereon his Son is set King to reign? whereon the holy city is to be built, and God to be worshipped in spirit? What condition is Zion in, when God visits her to redeem her? Is she not laid waste, desolate, lying in the dust? as Ps. cii. 13, 14. Well, how will God redeem her? "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." By bringing judgment upon that which keeps her under, upon her enemies, the contrary seed, God redeems her; and by bringing forth righteousness (the righteous life and Spirit of his own Son) in those whose minds are turned to her, whose faces are set Zion-ward; thus God redeems her converts. Yes, yes; it is truly felt and witnessed; the living righteousness of Christ revealed in the heart, and having power there, sets free from all the unrighteousness which was there before. And then, when the unrighteous one is cast out, and the righteous one revealed, and the soul united to him, and receives virtue and power from him, then he becomes a servant of righteousness, and doth not commit sin, but doth righteousness; "and he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1 John iii. 7. For how

can it be otherwise, when the righteous life is revealed and brought up into dominion in him? How can the same righteous Spirit and life (revealed in the members, as it was in the head) but live and act after the same manner in the members as it did in the head? (Oh that men were turned to that which would give them the certain knowledge and sensible experience of this!) Now this is exceeding comfortable and precious to them that are in the true travel towards it; much more to them that enjoy it.

This is the sum of all, even to know and experience what is to be brought down into death, and kept in death; what to be brought up out of the grave, to live to God, and reign in his dominion; and what to be kept in subjection and obedience to him who is to reign. Now to experience it thus done in the heart; the flesh brought down, the seed of life raised, and the soul subject to the pure heavenly power, whose right it is to reign in the heart in and by the seed; this is a blessed state indeed! For here the work is done; here the throne of God is exalted, and his King reigns in righteousness and peace, and all his enemies are under his feet; and this son, this true Israelite, this redeemed one, may wear the white robe, and serve God in righteousness and holiness, without fear of his enemies, (keeping in and to the covenant, which ministers life and power abundantly) all the days of his life. For that was to be the outward state of the outward Israel; keeping to God in the outward covenant; and it is to be the inward state of the inward Israel, keeping to God in the inward covenant, which is a pure covenant of life and peace, of all inward and spiritual blessings and mercies in Christ, wherewith the souls are blessed that are obedient unto God, and walk humbly with him in this covenant. And I beseech you to consider (O tender people! who are grieved because of sin and corruption in your hearts, and would fain witness victory and dominion over it, in the name and strength of the Lord Jesus Christ), whom did that prophecy of Zachariah (Luke i. 17, 72, 74, 75.) concern? What was that holy covenant? Who were to be so redeemed? Who

were the Israel that were to inherit this promise? All the promises are yea and amen in Christ to the Israel of God. Why should not the Israel of God hope to enjoy this? Even so to be acquainted with God's Holy Spirit, and to wait upon him, that they may witness it granted to them; that they, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him (whose eyes are piercing, and can behold no iniquity) all the days of their lives. Surely they who witness that promise (mentioned Isa. xxxv. 8.) fulfilled to them, cannot fall short of this. And truly the children of the new covenant can never come thoroughly to live to God till they witness the inward circumcision of the heart, so as to love the Lord with all the heart and soul. Deut. xxx. 6. Now where it is so, the devil or lust can find no place of entrance; and how then shall they be able to sow their seed, and bring forth sin? Out of the evil heart proceeds all evil; but out of that heart which is thoroughly circumcised, to love the Lord God wholly, evil cannot proceed. If lust be not conceived, it cannot bring forth sin; and where the womb which conceived it is kept dry and barren, it cannot conceive again. And is not this the promise of the gospel, that the womb which was once barren, shall be very fruitful, and beara bundantly; but the other grow feeble, and be able to bear no more? Oh! that people had experience of God's power, and did believe therein! What should stand in the way of it? It was Israel's sin of old, when they looked at their enemies, and saw their footing and strength in the land which God had promised to Abraham's seed for an inheritance, they could not believe that they could be overcome. Oh! take heed of the same unbelief now.

CONCERNING CHRIST;

COMING TO THE FATHER BY HIM, RECEIVING HIM, WALKING IN HIM, NOT IN THE OLDNESS OF THE LETTER, BUT IN THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT; AND CONCERNING READING THE SCRPTURES ARIGHT.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me," saith Christ. John xiv. 6.

MAN, in the corrupt, degenerate estate, is fallen from God, and hath lost his image (the holy, heavenly image of the Father of Spirits); is driven out from his presence, dwells in the land of darkness and confusion, under the government of the prince of the power of the air, who rules in, and hath power over, all the children of disobedience.

Now this should be man's work; even to return to the Father; to come back out of the prodigal lost state, to the Father's house; where there is sufficiency and fullness of true bread and water of life to satisfy every hungry and thirsty soul.

The way whereby a man must come, the truth wherein he must be renewed, the life wherein a man must be quickened, is Christ, the Son of the living God; and he must know him as the Son of the living God, and feel him revealed in him, and received by him, and so walk in him the way, in him the truth, in him the life, if ever he come to the Father. He must not rest in the description of things; but feel and know, receive and walk in the *thing*, which by the Spirit of the Lord hath been often formerly, and is still, described, in what words, and by what means, the Spirit pleaseth. But to receive all the descriptions of him that were formerly given forth, or all the descriptions that are now given forth, that will not do; but the soul that will

live by him, must receive him, and feel the ingrafting into him the holy root, the living word of God's eternal power, and must feel this word ingrafted into his heart, so that there be a real becoming one in nature and spirit with him. And then he is truly in the vine, in the olive-tree, and partakes of the virtue and sap thereof; he abiding therein, and walking in the spirit, life, and power thereof.

Now here a man walks not, nor cannot walk, in the oldness of the letter; but in the newness of the Spirit only. Paul, notwithstanding all his knowledge of the Scriptures, walked but in the oldness of the letter, before Christ was revealed in him. And those in the apostles' days, who had got the form of godliness, but turned from and denied the power, they walked but in the oldness of the letter. Yea, the church of Sardis, for the most part, and the church of Laodicea, who had received the right order and ordinances, and the true descriptions of things, and thought they were full and rich, and wanted nothing, they walked but according to the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness and power of the Spirit of life. But alas, how far are many, who pretend to Christ in this day, from this state! who never came so far as to walk in the oldness of the letter, from a true understanding thereof; but have only learned and continued to walk in the oldness of their own apprehensions and conceivings upon the letter.

Can these, in this state, possibly understand truth, or know the inward, spiritual, precious appearances thereof, either in their own hearts, or others? Surely no. Why so? Why this is the reason: because they measure the appearances of truth, either in themselves or others, by their own old apprehensions and conceivings upon scriptures concerning truth; which are not the proper measure of it. Now all such are yet in darkness, let them pretend what they will, and grow ever so high in knowledge, exercises, and experiences after this manner; and so the best, zealousest, and most knowing of them in this state, are but blind leaders of the blind, and, thus going on, shall most certainly fall into the ditch of perdition. Oh that men

could feel that which makes rightly sensible, and might lay it to heart! For no man can confess Christ (how then can he receive him, and walk in him?) but by the Holy Spirit.

And he that knoweth not the Spirit rightly, knoweth not Christ rightly; and he that doth not know him rightly, doth not confess him rightly; and none can know him rightly but by the revelation of the Father inwardly. The mystery must be opened within, or there is no true knowing. The mystery of deceit is discovered within, and the mystery of life is discovered within also. And though the heart of man, in the unregenerate estate, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and no man of himself can search or know it; yet this is not the estate of the true Israelites whom God hath cleansed, and taught to deny themselves daily; but they have boldness before that God who hath searched them, and removed from them the iniquities which he found therein. Yea, whoever witnesseth Christ revealed within, shall find him revealed within for this very end, to destroy the works of the devil there; and he is a powerful Saviour of the soul from sin, and a powerful destroyer of the works of the devil within.

Now concerning reading the Scriptures, mind this; It is said of the Jews, that when they read Moses (or in reading the Old Testament) the veil was upon their heart: which veil is done away in Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15. Oh! consider seriously, is the veil done away from thee? Dost thou read the Scriptures with the unveiled eye? Dost thou read in the anointing, in Christ's Spirit, in the pure heavenly wisdom of the divine birth? It was promised of old, that God would take away the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations. Dost thou witness the promise fulfilled to thee? Dost thou know the difference between reading the Scriptures with the veil on thee, and with the veil off? Are the Scriptures opened and unlocked to thee by the key of David, so that thou readest and understandest them in the light and demonstration of God's Holy Spirit; or is thy own understand-

ing and will at work of itself, in searching into the Scriptures? If the wrong birth, the wrong wisdom, the wrong understanding, be at work, it can gather but that which will feed and strengthen itself; and if thou beest not in Christ, and dost not read in Christ, the veil is not taken away from thee, for the veil is only done away in him; but thou readest and walkest in the oldness of thy apprehensions upon the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit: and so knowest neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God, whatever thou professest to men, or dreamest concerning thyself. For it is no other indeed; thy knowledge, thy apprehensions, thy faith, thy hope, thy peace, thy joy (being out of the compass of the pure, living truth, in which the substance, the virtue, the kernel of all is comprised and comprehended for ever) are but as so many dreams.

Oh that men that are any whit tender, and have any sincere desires in them towards the Lord, could read that one scripture (Psa. xliii. 3, 4.) sensibly and experimentally! "Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." (What! did not David know how to go to the hill and tabernacles of God, without a particular sending forth of light and truth from God to lead him thither?) Then may men go to the altar of God, unto God their exceeding joy, and witness his hill and house their dwelling-place, when God, by his light and truth, sent forth from him into them, leads them thither.

The Scriptures are words, whose chief end, drift, and service is, to bring men to the Word from which the Scriptures came. And when men are there, then they are in the life of the Scriptures, and witness the fulfilling of the Scriptures, even the executing the righteous judgments of God upon that spirit, mind, and nature in them, which is contrary to his image; and the fulfilling of the promises and sure mercies, which belong to Christ the seed, and to them who are gathered into, and abide in, Christ the seed. Here is the covenant, the new covenant. That which is said, or those things which are said, concerning the cove-

nant in the Scriptures, are but descriptions of the new covenant; but Christ within, the hope of glory, the Spirit within, the fear within, the power of life within, breaking down and reigning over the power of sin and death (so that the Lord is served in the dominion and power of his own life, in the righteousness and holiness before him, out of the fear of sin and death, all the days of our lives; so that captivity can lead captive, nor break the soul's peace no more; nay, not so much as make afraid those that keep their habitation on God's holy mountain); here is the covenant indeed, the strength and virtue whereof is witnessed in the soul, as the soul feels the power of life revealed in it, and is made subject by the power of Christ, who reigns in righteousness, love, mercy, and peace, in the hearts of those whom he redeems out of the earthly nature and spirit, up to the mind and Spirit of his Father. And here the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the pure songs (the song of Moses, the song of the Lamb) are sung to the Father of spirits, to the Redeemer of Israel; which never were sung, nor can be sung, in any part of Babylon; but all those songs are but dreams of the night, which will be turned into howling and bitter lamentation, when the whore (that which hath whored from God, and is not in the wisdom of his Spirit, whatever she may pretend) is stripped, and the nakedness of her profession and religion (with all her duties and ordinances, as she calls them) made manifest.

Concerning the Gospel Ministration.

If the gospel be not a ministration of words or letter, but of Spirit, life, and power; and if it was the intent of God that men should not stick in words or testimonies concerning the thing, but come to the thing itself, and live in the Son's life and power, and feel the Son living in them, then they are greatly mistaken, who think to gather a rule to themselves out of the testimonies and declarations of things in the Scriptures, and do not wait upon the Lord to receive

his Spirit itself to become their rule, guide, and way. For these are all one; the truth is the way; the truth which lives and abides in the heart (where it is received and entertained) is the way; the rule is the guide: for God is *One*. There are many names, but the thing is *One*. The life, the power, the wisdom in the Father, Son, and Spirit, *is all One:* yea, they themselves are *One*, perfectly *One*, not at all divided or separated; but where the Father is, the Son is; and where the Son is, the Spirit is; and where the Spirit is, there is both the Father and the Son, who tabernacle in man in the day of the gospel. And where these are, *there* that is which is to be preferred before all words, which was afore them, and is in nature, Spirit, and glory above them. He that hath the Son, hath life, even the life eternal, which the words testify of. He that hath the Son hath him which is true; and he that is in the Son is in him that is true; and abiding there, cannot be deceived; but he that is not there is deceived, let him apprehend and gather out of the Scriptures what he can. Oh, how is God glorified, and how is the redemption and real salvation of the soul witnessed in this despised dispensation of truth, which God hath held forth in these latter days! Blessed be the name of the Lord, who hath hid this pure dispensation of life from the eye of the prudent worldly-wise part in every man, revealing it only to the babish simplicity which is of his Son, and which lives in him, and by him.

Concerning Christ's being manifested without, and his being also manifested within, and how both are owned by them that know the Truth.

It is objected against us, who are called Quakers, that we deny Christ (and look not to be saved by him) as he was manifested without us, but look only to be saved by a Christ in us. To which this is in my heart to answer such as singly desire satisfaction therein.

We do indeed expect to be saved (yea, and not only so, but do already, in our several measures, witness salvation)

by the revelation and operation of the life of Christ within us; yet not without relation to what he did without us. For all that he did in that body of flesh was of the Father, and had its place and service in the will, and according to the counsel, of the Father. But the knowledge and belief of that, since the days of the apostles, have been very much held in the unrighteousness, and in the separation from the inward work of the power and life of Christ in the heart; which, as so held, cannot save any. But whoever feels the light and life of Christ revealed in him, and comes into union with God there-through, he feels the work of regeneration, of sanctification, of justification, of life, and redemption; and so comes to reap benefit inwardly, and to partake of the blessed fruits of all that Christ did outwardly. Yea, he that is thus one with Christ in the Spirit, cannot exclude himself, nor is excluded by God, from the advantage of any thing, nor every thing, Christ did in that body of flesh.

This indeed is the main thing, to witness salvation wrought out in the heart; to witness the eternal power and arm of the Lord laying hold on the soul to save it; and not only laying hold on it to save it, but to witness the working out and the effecting of the salvation, as really in the substance, as Israel of old did in the shadow. For as they witnessed Moses and Joshua outwardly, so the true Israelite, the inward Israelite, the spiritual Israelite, is to witness that which is the substance of these, even the Son of God revealed inwardly. Now they were not saved outwardly by a bare outward believing that Moses and Joshua were sent of God to save them; but by following them in faith and obedience to what from God they required. So to the inward Israel Christ is given for a leader and commander, who appears to the distressed embondaged soul in Egypt, brings out of Egypt, and so leads on towards the good land, and into it. Now as the soul follows, as the soul believes in his appearances, and obeys his voice in the holy, pure covenant of life; so he works out the redemption thereof. But as unbelief and disobedience get up, and the heart is hardened at any time against his voice and counsel, and the

ear open to the temptations of the enemy, the redemption thereby goes backward, and the distress and captivity return again. This is witnessed, known, and experienced by every true traveller towards Zion; therefore the main thing requisite is to abide in the sense of the Redeemer's power, as also in waiting for his motions and appearances, and in the faith and obedience thereof. For sin gathers strength, and is brought forth, by letting in and giving way to the motions thereof: and so also holiness and righteousness is brought forth and getteth ground in the mind, by hearkening and giving up to the stirrings and movings of God's Holy Spirit. Therefore it is of great necessity to every true traveller to come to a right understanding and distinguishing of these; and that the heart may be kept with all diligence, because out of it are the issues both of life and death. And most happy is he who knows the issues of death stopped, and the issues of life opened, and whose spirit is naked and open before the Lord, for life to spring up in him, and issue forth through him at its pleasure. Oh! it is a precious state to witness captivity led captive by life, and the power of life reigning over it. And truly there is as real deliverance witnessed inwardly, by those that wait upon the Lord, and are faithful to the leadings of his Holy Spirit, as ever there was by the Jews outwardly, in their faithful following Moses and Joshua: and Christ is as truly a healer of his people, in this ministration of life to them by his Holy Spirit, as ever he was a healer of persons outwardly in the days of the flesh. That, with the other miracles which he wrought then, was but a shadow of what he would work and perform inwardly in the day of his Spirit and holy power: and shall he, or can he (to those that faithfully wait upon him) fall short in the one, of what he shadowed out in the other? Nay, surely; it was the intent of his heart, and he will not fail to perform it, to save to the very utmost all that come to God by him, and abide in his holy, pure, righteous, living covenant. Here is the skill of Christianity, to abide in him; and here the living virtue and pure power is felt, which overcometh all, but

nothing can overcome it: but victory, dominion, glory, majesty, and power is sung unto him, who is King of saints, who reigns in righteousness, and who establisheth peace and truth within his borders.

A FEW WORDS CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH; WHAT IT IS, HOW IT MAY BE DISCERNED, AND HOW IT MAY BE PURCHASED AND POSSESSED.

Quest. 1. WHAT is the principle of truth?

Ans. It is the light, which reproves and makes sin manifest. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Wherefore he saith, "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead," &c. Eph. v. 13, 14. There is no other way of awaking out of sleep, and arising from the dead, but by the light which makes sin manifest. And oh, how precious is that light!

Quest. 2. How may the principle of truth be discerned?

Ans. By its piercing, quickening nature, which discovereth itself in its appearances and operations. For it appears and works, not like man's reason, or like motions of his mind which he takes into his understanding part; but it appears and works livingly, powerfully, and effectually in the heart.

Man's reason is corrupt, dark, impure, since the fall; and in the hand and under the power of the wicked one. Its nature is to hide and cover sin, not to discover it. Now the light of the law, which discovers sin, ariseth not hence. Who can bring the clean, pure light of the law out of the unclean, impure reason of man? The light indeed may shine in the darkness; but it is no part of it, but of another nature and descent. It is from God's Spirit, and given to man in his love unto him, to lead him out of his dark ways and spirit, into the pure Spirit and way of holiness. For the light which discovers sin, is all holy and pure, like the fountain from whence it comes. Now a man that is acquainted both with reason and with this light, he can dis-

tinguish the nature and operations of both. For there is a great difference between truth held in the reasoning part, and truth held in its own principle. It is very powerful in the one; it effecteth little in the other. In the pure quickenings of life this distinction is perceived, and also held. Therefore our advice is to all men, to retire from all mortality, that they may come to feel the spring of life in themselves, and something springing therefrom into them to quicken them, and to wait to have their understandings opened and kept open by that; that so they may receive, retain, and not again lose the capacity of understanding the things of God's kingdom.

Quest. 8. How may this principle, seed, or pearl, be purchased and possessed?

Ans. By dying to a man's own wisdom and will. There is not another way. For the light is wholly contrary to man, as he stands in the alienation from God. It crosseth his spirit, his thoughts, his desires, his knowledge, his reason, his understanding; even all that is of himself. He must therefore consult with none of these, but prefer the little, pure demonstration of the light of Christ's Spirit above all these, and stand in the parting with and loss of them all for ever. Oh! this is an hard saying, who can bear it? Surely none but those that are taught and learn of the Father, can thus come to give up to and follow the light of the Son.

"The law of the Lord is perfect; converting (or restoring) the soul." Psa. xix. 7. What law was this or what law is this? Was it the law of works in the hand of Moses? Or is it the law of faith in the hand of Christ? Doth not Christ enlighten every man that cometh into the world? Would not God have all men to be saved? And doth he not give to all a proportion of the true light whereby they may be saved? And is it not the property of this light to convert to God? Can any man receive this, and be united to this, and it not change his nature? So that he must needs have a new nature, and from that new nature do that naturally, which the Jews, by all their endeavors without this, could never do.

Can any thing convert fallen man to God, but Christ? Hath any thing power to convert to God, but his pure law of life? Can Christ and his light be separated? Can any man receive his light and be united thereto, and not receive him? Oh that men's hearts and understandings were opened by the Spirit and power of the Lord! For this is a direct riddle to all men, who have not God's heifer to plow with, to understand it by. And so for want of a true understanding, it is despised and rejected among the builders; but with us it is elect and precious, chosen of God, and precious in the eye of our souls.

Now this doth not exclude or make void any thing that Christ did in his body of flesh here on earth, or that he doth in heaven for his; but this brings unto a right, and into a possession and enjoyment of his purchase. For all that are in the darkness, and walk in the darkness, have nothing to do with Christ in truth and reality, whatever they may profess, and what hopes so ever they may feed themselves with; but all that are in any measure of his light, and walk therein, they are so far of him, and have a right to, and share in, all that he did in and from the same light and Spirit.

And this I dare positively hold forth as a standing truth, which hath been sealed unto me by constant experience; That no man can fall in with and obey the light wherewith he is enlightened, but he must deny himself, and take up a cross to his own wisdom and will; which cross is the cross of Christ, which is the power of God to the salvation of the soul. And he that takes it up daily, and waits upon the Lord therein, shall witness the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to the redemption of his soul; yea, then he shall be able in true understanding to say; This is light indeed, life indeed, power indeed. That powerful arm which hath saved me from sin, and breaks the snares, devices, and strength of the enemy before me (delivering me daily when none else can, and when my own strength and wisdom is as nothing), I cannot but call Christ, the living power and wisdom of God revealed in me, who will not give his glory to another. For he is the Lord God of pure power and life for

evermore; and beside him there is no such Saviour. Yea, blessed be the name of the Lord for ever, the days of mourning after salvation are over with many, and the days of reaping and enjoying salvation are come, which shall endure with the Israel of God for evermore, amen.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

LETTERS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON.

To a Couple about to Marry.

Dear Friends,

It is a great and weighty thing that ye are about; and ye have need of the Lord's leading and counsel therein, that it may be done in the unity of his life; that so Friends in Truth may feel it to be of God, and find satisfaction therein.

Friends, the affectionate part will be forward in things of this nature, unless it be yoked down; and it will persuade the mind to judge such things to be right and of the Lord, when indeed they are not so. Now, if it be not of the Lord, but the affectionate part, Friends cannot have unity with it, nor will it prove a blessing to you; but you will find it an hurt to your conditions, and a load upon your spirits afterwards, and the fruits and effects of it will not be good, but evil; and then, perhaps, ye will wish that ye had waited more singly and earnestly upon the Lord, in relation to the thing; and that ye had taken more time, and consulted more with Friends, before there had been any engagement of affections. The Lord, by his providence, hath given you a little time of respite. Oh, retire unto him, and abase yourselves before him, and pray him to counsel you, by his good Spirit, for your good! that, if it be not of the Lord, the power, being waited upon by you, may loosen your affections in this respect. But if it be of the Lord, and be orderly brought before Friends, and their counsel and advice sought in the fear of the Lord, they will have unity with it, and with gladness express their unity; which may

be a strength unto you, against the tempter afterwards.

This is in true love to you, and in singleness of heart, the Lord knoweth. From your friend in the truth.

I. P.

4th of Third Month, 1668.

To Miles Stanclif.

Dear M. S.,

Thou art often in my heart; and indeed, I do many times bow unto the Father of spirits, for the preservation of whatever is good in thee, for the clear discovery to thee of what is not of his pure life, and for the separation of thy mind from it; that the life of Christ may conquer in thee, and thou thereby be fully redeemed to the Lord. I often inquire after thee; and when I hear of any tenderness or diligence in thee towards the truth, my heart rejoiceth therein.

Dear friend, deceit is very deep, and hath much prevailed; but the Lord is gathering out of it, and preparing such, by the power of his life, against future snares. O dear friend! take heed of thy own wisdom, thy own sense, thy own judgment, which thou mayest easily, through mistake, call the Lord's; but to have all that is of self searched out and brought under, and the mind made truly sensible of, and fully subject to, the life in every thing,—this is a sore travel; and it is very hard to come hither, through all deceits and entanglements. The Lord entirely join thy mind to that and preserve thee in that, which gives thee at any time a sense of truth, and of those who are in the truth: these are to be known and honored in the Lord, according to their growth. And take heed of that which prejudices and disjoins; but feel and cleave to that which uniteth in love, life, and pure power. Know that unity and fellowship which is in the spirit; and keep it, keep it in the bond of pure peace: and take heed, oh for ever take heed of whatever would break the bond! but that which makes of one mind and one judgment, one heart and one soul, *that* is the

living principle, *that* is the living power, which all the members of the body are to inhabit and be one in. And watch against the reasonings of the mind, and the thoughts of thy heart; watch to the sense which riseth up in the fear, in the love, in the humility, that thou mayest feel the leadings of God's Spirit, and come through all that stands in thy way; having the help of all whom the Lord hath ordained, and made able to be helpers to thee. For life is not to be limited, but we are to be limited by that which is of the life; and in cases of doubt, it is the ordinance of the Lord, for the weak to receive counsel and help from the strong, and for the lesser to be watched over and blessed by the greater,—by such as are more grown up in the life, and in the power.

So the Lord God Almighty lead thee fully into, and preserve thee perfectly in, the way everlasting.

Thy friend in the true love,

I. P.

16th of Third month, 1668.

To John Mannock.

Friend,

Hath the Lord drawn thy heart to hear the sound of truth, and given thee some sense and savor thereof, though perhaps not as yet full satisfaction in all things that are truly and faithfully testified concerning it? Oh prize this love of God to thee! and watch and pray, and come into the pure fear; that thou mayst walk worthy of it, and mayst discern in spirit what it is that gives thee the savor; and so receive the leaven of the kingdom, and feel its leavening virtue upon thy heart day by day. For after the Lord hath been at work, the enemy will be at work also; and thou mayst both meet with him without, and within too, in reasonings and questionings against the demonstrations of God's Spirit to thy heart and conscience. Now if thou wilt hearken to these, they will eat out the sense and belief of what God's Spirit begat in thee. Oh! how many wise men, and how

many knowing men, that have tasted of some true experiences, have not the sense and discerning of the Spirit and power of the Lord, as it is now made manifest; but speak hard words, and think hard thoughts of his truth and its precious appearances.

Ah! what are we, any of us, on whom the Lord hath shown his mercy, and whose hearts he toucheth, and maketh sensible of his drawings? yea, and not only so, but also gives us to partake of the eternal life and virtue, which he hath hid in his Son from the eyes of all living. We sought it up and down, in the deeps and heights; but the deep said, It is not in me; and the highest mountain and hill that ever we met with, could not bring salvation to us. But at length we found the fear of the Lord to be the true wisdom, and that which taught us to depart from evil, gave us the true understanding. Now if any among us are not thus taught, but only own the doctrines of truth published among us, being thereunto overcome by the demonstration of God's Spirit; yet for all this they are not felt by us in the life and unity of the Spirit of the Lord with us; and such the Lord will manifestly prune off in his own due time, and graft in others in their stead. Yea, such as do indeed give up to truth, and in measure feel the power of it, and are made by the power of the Lord subject to it—yet, if in any thing they let in the spirit of the world, and act according thereto, so far they are not of the truth, nor owned by it.

Now dear friend (for so far as thy heart is touched by God's Spirit and answereth thereto, thou art dear unto me), mind thy condition, and wait on the Lord in humility of heart, and in subjection to what he inwardly by his Spirit daily makes manifest; that thou mayest come into the obedience of the truth daily; that thou mayest daily feel the change which is wrought in the heart and conscience by the holy, eternal, ever-living power; that so thou mayest witness according to the Scriptures, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And then thou wilt feel that this birth of the Spirit cannot fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but

will be warring and fighting the good fight of faith, in the power of life against them; and thus in faithfulness to the truth and waiting upon the Lord, thou shalt witness an overcoming in his due time. For indeed the true faith overcomes, the true shield beats down the most fiery darts, and in the power of the Lord the enemy is so resisted, that he fleeth; and the name of the Lord is indeed a strong tower to his children, to which his seed know how to retire and feel safety.

Oh the conquering faith, the overcoming life and power of the Spirit! We cannot but speak of those things; and cry up the perfect gift, and the power of Him, who is not only able to perfect his work in the heart, but delights so to do; and even to tread down Satan under the feet of those that wait in patience for the perfect conquest; for nothing else will fully satisfy. The rest, the peace, the liberty, the life, the virtue of the gospel, is not fully known and enjoyed while there remains any sin to sting and trouble. And this I can faithfully witness; that when the power is revealed, when the blood washeth, the soul is clean and as white as snow; and the enemy hath not power to break in, but life triumphs over him. And why may there not be a continuance of such a state? Yea, I verily believe many can witness a continuance of such a state; which the Spirit of the Lord doth not call less in them than a perfect state, a sound state; wherein Christ, the heavenly Physician, hath healed them perfectly, and made them witnesses of true soundness of soul and spirit in the sight of God. Oh that all knew and enjoyed it who truly desire and long after it!

But as for thee, this is in my heart to thee. Thou hast found the pearl; the Lord, in mercy to thee, hath discovered to thee the true pearl. Now this remains; that thou be a wise merchant, selling all to purchase it. Thou must keep back nothing. Christ, the living truth, the holy power of righteousness, must be dearer to thee than all. If father, mother, livelihood, liberty, friendship, outward advantages, &c., or any thing else be dearer to thee than

him, he will look upon thee as unworthy of him; and cannot but turn from thee, and suffer hardness and darkness to come again upon thee. Therefore prize the day of thy visitation from the holy God, from the God of mercy and salvation; and be faithful in the little, in the day of small things, if ever thou desire to enjoy and be ruler over much. The Lord may exercise thee in, and require of thee, little things; as he hath done the rest of the flock, whose footsteps thou art to follow to the Shepherd's tents; and the enemy will be endeavoring to stop thee, and perplex thee, in every little thing that the Lord requires of thee. But be thou simple, like a child, not taking care what to answer wise professors, nor what to answer the reasonings of thy own mind; but seeing thou hast felt the demonstration of truth from God's Holy Spirit, oh! breathe unto the Lord to preserve thee in the innocency and simplicity thereof, that the Lord may still be with thee; and thereby bring thee through the day of Jacob's trouble, to taste of Jacob's deliverance and salvation out of trouble: for thou must meet with trials as well as others have done, and the enemy's endeavor will be, to make thee stumble and start back in the day of trial. But if thine eye be towards the Lord, he will uphold and strengthen thee, and bring thee through all that stands in thy way; manifesting to thee daily more and more the path of holiness, in which the ransomed of the Lord walk, and enabling *thee* also to walk therein.

Therefore watch the thoughts and reasonings which rise in thee, and retire from them, waiting to feel the pure seed, and to hear its voice in stillness; whose voice is otherwise, than after the noises of the questionings and reasonings, which the enemy raiseth in the mind, to fill it with doubts and troubles: and to weaken the faith and sense which God wrought in the heart, when he reached forth his truth in the power and demonstration of his Spirit unto it. This was God's love, this was the day of his power; which loosens the mind from its lovers, and the ways of its own choosing, and begets a willingness to be joined to the Lord and his pure truth.

Oh, take heed of hearkening to the enemy, to the subtle reasoner, the entangler of the soul! take heed of consulting there, where he lays his baits to entangle the mind, and undo the work of God's power in the heart; and so to make unwilling again, after the Lord had made willing. The steps which the soul takes in the power, even the inclining of the mind towards the Lord and his pure truth, tend to salvation; but if any let in unbelief of those things, concerning which God hath wrought faith in them, they draw back to perdition; they hearken to that which tempts from the Lord, and to him whose end is to destroy them.

This is in true love to thee, and from an upright desire, that thou mayest feel the Lord's preservation of thy soul, in that which is of him, and his separating thee from all that is not of him.

From a friend to all that breathe after the Lord, and desire to know and partake of the power and life of truth, as it is in Jesus, the alone Redeemer and Saviour of the soul.

I. P.

3d or 4th of Tenth Month, 1668.

To John Mannock.

Friend,

It is a wonderful thing, to witness the power of God reaching to the heart, and demonstrating to the soul the pure way to life, as in his sight and presence. Surely he that partakes of this is therein favored by the Lord, and ought diligently to wait, for the giving up to the leadings of his Holy Spirit in every thing; that so, he may travel through all that is contrary to the Lord, into that nature and spirit which is of him. It is a wonderful thing also to witness God's preservation from backsliding, and from being entangled by the subtlety of the enemy; who hath many ways and taking devices to ensnare the simple mind, and draw it from the sense of truth, into some notions and belief of things; wherein the soul may be lulled asleep with hopes

and persuasions, but hath not the feeling or enjoyment of the true life and power.

O friend! hast thou a sense of the way to the Father? then, be careful that thy spirit daily bow before him, and wait for breathings to him from his pure Spirit, that he would continue his mercy to thee; keeping thee in the true sense, and making thy way more and more clear before thee every day; yea, and bearing thee up in all the exercises and trials which may befall thee, in every kind; that, by his secret working in thy spirit, and helping thee with a little help from time to time, thou mayest still be advancing nearer and nearer towards the kingdom; until thou find the Lord God administer an entrance unto thee thereinto, and give thee an inheritance of life, joy, righteousness, and peace therein; which is strength unto the soul against sin and death, and against the sorrow and trouble which ariseth in the mind, for want of God's presence and holy power revealed there.

And be not careful after the flesh, but trust the Lord. What though thou art weak, and little; though thou meet with those that are wise and knowing; and almost every way able to reason thee down; what though thou hast not wherewith to answer; yet thou knowest and hast the feeling of God's pure Truth in spirit, with a desire to have the life of it brought forth in thee, and so to witness the change and renewings which are by his power. O dear heart! herein thou art accepted of the Lord, and here his tender love and care will be over thee, and his mercy will daily reach to thee; and thou shalt have true satisfaction in thy heart, and hold the Truth there, where all the reasonings of men, and all the devices of the enemy of thy soul, shall not be able to reach; yea, thou shalt so feel the Lord to help his babe against the strength of the mighty, in the seasons of his good pleasure, as shall exceedingly turn to his praise; and so thou shalt experience that whom God preserves, all the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against. Therefore look not out at men, or at the words and wisdom of men; but keep where thou hast felt the

Lord visit thee, that he may visit thee yet again and again every day, and be teaching thee further and further the way to his dwelling-place, and be drawing thee thither, where is righteousness, life, rest, and peace for ever.

This arose in my heart this morning in tender love towards thee. Look up to the Lord, who can make it useful to thee, to warm, quicken, and strengthen thy heart and mind towards the Lord, and his pure truth, wherewith he has visited thee. And if thou feel any thing therein suitable to the state and condition of thy soul, oh, bow before the Lord! that in the true humility thou mayest confess, and give the glory to him of what belongs to him.

From thy friend in the truth, which cleanseth the heart from iniquity, as it is embraced and dwelt in.

I. P.

23d of Tenth Month, 1668.

To ——— ———

O Friend!

That thou hadst the true sense of the drift of my heart in writing and sending things to thee!—which is and hath been this—that thou mightest be acquainted with that of God in the heart, which quickens to him; and in the light of that, mightest try thy heart and ways, and so only justify in thyself what God justifies, and let all else go.

Shall the Lord appear mightily on the earth and Israel not know him? Shall the professors of this age understand no more his appearance in Spirit, than the Jews did his appearance in flesh? Shall they stumble at the very same stumbling stone? Yes, the same stumbling stone is laid, for that wisdom to stumble at, as in all generations; and there is no avoiding stumbling, but by coming out of that wisdom into babe-like simplicity, which gives entrance into pure, heavenly wisdom. And this I dare affirm as in God's presence and in his pure fear, having received the sense thereof from him—that there is none that opposeth this his

present appearance (by the greatest knowledge and wisdom of their comprehensions from the letter), but would also have opposed and denied his appearance in that body of flesh, had they lived in that day. For the wisdom which *they* gathered from the letter, did not reveal Christ in that day, but the Father; and the same reveals him in *this* day.

Oh that thou couldst feel the pure revelation from the Father to thy heart! Oh wait for a new heart, a new ear, a new eye! even to feel the pure in thee, and thy mind changed by the pure, that all things may become new to thee; the Scriptures new (they are so indeed when God opens them), duties new, ordinances new, graces new, experiences new; a new church of the Spirit's building, wherein he and thy soul may dwell together; and thou mayest be able to say in the presence of the Lord, this is a city of God's own building, the foundation whereof was laid with sapphires, whose walls are salvation, and its gates praise.

I. P.

12th of Third Month, 1669.

To Catherine Pordage.

Friend,

Thy estate and condition hath been pretty much with me since I last saw thee. I am sensible how hard it is for thee to give up to be reached by the seed and power of life; how readily and easily thy ear and heart is opened to another, and the adulterer entertained, who hunteth after the precious life. This word of advice hath been much in my heart to thee this morning: Sit down and count the cost of plowing up thy field, and of searching after the hidden treasure of pure and true wisdom, and consider seriously, whether thou canst sell all for it, both inward and outward riches; that if thou do set thy hand to the plow, thou mayest not look back after any thing else, within or without, but mayest be content and satisfied with the pearl of true wisdom and life alone.

Now if thou be truly willing in God's sight thus to do, thou must singly give up to follow the Lord in the leadings of his Spirit, out of all the ways of thy own wisdom and knowledge, out of all things wherein thou hast a life and delight out of him; thou must not determine what thou hast a life in, but the Lord must search thy heart, and he will soon show thee (if thy heart be naked and open before him, willing to hear and learn of him) somewhat in thy heart, somewhat in thy ways, somewhat in thy words, thoughts, &c., which is contrary to his pure life and Spirit; and then that must be denied and given up immediately. And afterwards perhaps the Lord will soon discover to thee another lover, which hath had more of thy heart than thou hast been aware of; and so thou must part with one after another until thou hast parted with all; and this will prepare thee for the bosom of thy Beloved, who is a jealous God, and seeth not with the eye wherewith man seeth. But if thou be not thus singly given up, though thou should put thy hand to the plow, thou wilt be looking back some time or other: and that wisdom which draweth aside from the Lord will blind thy eye, and deceive thy mind, and draw thee from the simplicity and nakedness of truth, into some image or other of it, so that instead of the pure truth itself, thou wilt believe and embrace a lie.

Thou hast travelled long in the heights above the seed; oh, consider if that be not yet standing in thee, which could not have been found standing, if thou hadst known the true seed and travelled therewith! This enhances the price of truth as to thee, that thou must part with more for it, than will be required of many others; yet if thou be faithful to the Lord, and diligently follow him in the simplicity, truth will at length recompense thee for all thy labors, sorrows, and travels. But a thorough work will the Lord make in thy earth, if thou singly give up unto him, and faithfully follow; and many devices wilt thou meet with to turn thy mind out of the way, and to cause thee to shun the bitterness of the cross, and to kindle and nourish a hope in thee, that thou mayest find a more easy way to the same life and

everlasting substance. The Lord hath reached to thee, and the Lord is willing to search thy heart, to find out the deceiver and enemy in his most secret lurking-places; but when the Lord hath found him out, thou must give him up to God's stroke, and not suffer him to find a shelter in thy mind to save him therefrom. For he is very subtle, and will twist and twine all manner of ways to deceive thee and save himself; nor art thou yet acquainted with, or able to discern his devices. The Lord alone can help thee, and he will help thee, if thou be not hasty to join with the enemy, nor give up thy judgment to believe what he represents, and seems inwardly to represent to thee as true; but abide and dwell in the sense of thy own inability to judge, waiting to feel that which is true, pure, and living of God, judge in thee, not so much in demonstrations of wisdom, as in tender and secret drawings of the beginnings of a new nature, away from what is of an earthly nature. For thou must come out of the spirit of this world, if thou wilt come into God's Spirit; and thou must come out of the love of the things of this world, if thou wilt come out of the spirit of this world; for in the love of the things of this world, the spirit of this world lodgeth and dwelleth, and thou canst not touch the unclean thing, but thou also touchest somewhat of the unclean spirit. Therefore said John from a true and deep understanding, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world," (if thou love the things of the world, thou lovest the world), for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

The day of God's mercy and visitation is upon thee, who is visiting that spirit in thee which hath led thee aside, even with the judgment proper for it; that Zion in thee might be thereby redeemed, and thy soul converted to, and truly brought forth in, righteousness.

I. P.

11th of First Month 1670.

To Thomas Walmsley.

Dear Friend,

There is somewhat on my heart this morning to write to thee, in the same love wherein I have hitherto written, which I feel to be pure, of God, and unfeigned towards thee and all men; though it also putteth a difference between those that are renewed by him and bear his image, and those who have only a form of religion, without the power and life thereof, which sanctifies and redeems up to God, wherever it is received.

That which was on my heart to thee, in true, pure, and tender love, is this which follows:

All true religion hath a true root; and that religion, profession, worship, faith, hope, peace, assurance, &c., which groweth not from the true root, is not true.

Now this root is near, and must be felt near, bearing the branch and causing it to bring forth fruit. It is not enough to hear of Christ, or read of Christ; but this is the thing,—to feel him my root, my life, my foundation; and my soul ingrafted into him, by him who hath power to ingraft. To feel repentance given me by him, faith given me by him, the Father revealed and made known to me by him, by the pure shinings of his light in my heart; God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness, causing it to shine there; so that in and through him, I come to know, not the Son himself only, but the Father also:—and then to come out of the darkness, out of the sin, out of the pollutions of the spirit of this world, into the pure, holy fellowship of the living, by his holy guidance and conduct; and so to feel all my prayers, all my comforts, all my willingness, all my ability to do and suffer for God and the testimony of his truth, to arise from this holy, pure root of life, which gives daily strength against sin and death, to all who wait, in true humility and pure subjection of soul and spirit upon him:—here is unspeakable comfort and satisfaction given

by him to the soul, which all the reasonings of men, with all the devices of Satan, cannot damp. For He who gave it preserves and maintains it over all the strength that can assault it.

O friend! I beseech thee mind this; come, oh come to the true root! come to Christ indeed! Rest not in an outward knowledge; but come to the inward life, the hidden life, and receive life from him who is the life; and then abide in and live to God in the life of his Son. For death and destruction, corruption and vanity, may talk of the fame of Christ, who is the wisdom of God; but they cannot know nor find out the place where this wisdom is revealed; they cannot come at the true, pure fear, which God puts into the hearts of his; this is the beginning of the true wisdom which cleanses darkness and impurity out of the hearts of those to whom it is given. For light expelleth darkness; life expelleth death; purity expelleth impurity; Christ, where he is received, bindeth and casts out the strong man, taking possession of the heart. And if any man be truly and really in Christ, he comes to witness a new creation, even the passing away of old things, and all things becoming new.

Christ is faithful in all his house ("whose house are we," saith the apostle, "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." Heb. iii. 6.), faithful as a Son, who comes in the name and authority of the Father, to do whatsoever is to be done in the heart, faithful in discovering whatever is contrary to God there, faithful in engaging his power against it. And shall not his power prevail? and where it doth prevail, and the good pleasure of God's goodness is fulfilled, and the work of faith with power, is not the name of the Lord Jesus Christ glorified there? Read 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. and consider. Did Christ overcome the devil in that body of his flesh, and shall he not overcome him in the hearts of his children by the power of his Spirit, which he received of the Father to comfort them, and carry on his work gloriously in them? What shall become of those that do not fight under Christ,

and overcome through Christ? Read Rev. iii. 21. I would not have thee deceived of thy soul, or of that religion which saves the soul, which religion stands not in word, but in power. Therefore wait to feel the Spirit and power of Christ saving thee from that which nothing else can save thee from; and bringing that down in thee under his feet which nothing else can bring down.

This is from the true desire which my soul hath, after the eternal salvation and satisfaction of thine.

I. P.

28th of First Month, 1670.

To Elizabeth Walmsley.

Dear Friend,

Who art lovely to me in that precious life wherewith the Lord hath visited thee, and wherein he hath brought thee forth for his service, and to his praise.

Our Father is wise and powerful, who hath begun a work which he is able to carry on; and all the briars and thorns of the wilderness are not able to stop his course, who is "a consuming fire."

I find the spirits of Friends here much raised, who dwell in the fear and dread of the Lord God Almighty, where the fear and dread of man is removed far away. The Lord preserve us near unto himself, out of that which separates from him and weakens; and nothing shall be able to interrupt our joy in the Lord, nor our delight and pleasure in his will. Lo! I come, saith the child, to do thy will, O God! to drink the cup thou hast prepared; although there is a nature which cannot but say, If it be possible, let it pass away; but *that* nature is bowed down and subjected under its proper yoke, and, in submission, is kept out of sinning against the Lord, and is accepted by him who bows it, and makes it willing to follow the Lamb in the day of his power.

Truly the Lord hath done great things for us! He hath given us the sight and knowledge of himself in his Son, which is life eternal: he hath given us of the nature and

spirit of his Son; he hath given us of the true faith whereby the just lives, and obtains victory over sin, death, and the grave; he hath given us of the hope which purifies the heart, and stays the mind in all storms; he hath given us of the Lamb's patience and meekness &c. And now if he will brighten these by afflictions, and try them, and cause them to shine to his glory; yea, and take advantage to increase them, and add further virtue to them, what cause have any of us to complain? Israel, of old, after the flesh, murmured upon every trial; but Israel, after the new creation, doeth not so, but blesseth the Lord, and repineth not at the instruments which he permitteth to afflict them; but they love the Lord and love his truth, and are faithful in their testimony thereto, whatever befalls them. Yea, they rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer in any kind for his name's sake, and are like lambs before the shearers, not opening their mouths in a way of murmuring or reviling; but instead thereof, pitying them, praying for them, and blessing; because God hath made them children of love, children of peace, children of blessing; which nature they retain, in the midst of all their trials and afflictions, and show forth the virtues of Him that hath called them.

So that men shall not put out our life, nor put out our light, nor sever us from the love and power of God; but the more need we find of our God, and of his help and strength, the nearer shall we be driven to him, and dwell more closely in union with him, and in holy and humble dependence upon him. And in this temper shall we draw and receive more from him: and the more we draw from him, the better will it be with us, and the more like him shall we be.

The Lord keep open that heavenly eye in his children and servants, which looks over this world, with the affairs and concerns thereof, to that which is immortal and invisible; where our life is hid from others, though made manifest in and felt by us, from the living spring which quickens, nourisheth, and refresheth. And as afflictions abound from men, so shall consolations, life, and strength abound from

the Lord, unto all, and upon all, who look not out, but abide and await there, where it springs and flows.

My dear love is to Friends in these parts (particularly M. O.); the Lord preserve them and keep them near to himself, that they may receive counsel and strength from him, according to their need. I am sensible of thy great love to us, expressed in thy care and tenderness of our child, as well as in other things: I hope she is no burden to thee. Oh that she might feel and be guided by that which keeps in order all that are subject to it!

I remain thy friend and brother, in the life and love which never dies nor changes,

I. P..

18th of Second Month, 1670.

To Widow Hemmings.

My Dear Friend,

Whom I truly love, and whose prosperity in the truth I earnestly desire. Because I find thy mind much engaged about one thing; to wit, receiving bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's death, which I am tender to thee in; yet withal, it is on my heart at this time to say somewhat to thee; perhaps the Lord may open thy mind, and let thee into some sense of the thing.

There is a supper, or supping with Christ, beyond outward bread and wine, which he promised to those that heard his voice, opened the door, and let him in. Rev. iii. 20. Now it is *that* supper, it is the desire of my heart thou mayst be acquainted with, and partake of. And as thou comest to be acquainted with it, and partake of it, thou wilt call it the feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined. Christ said, "Henceforth I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." What wine, what fruit of the vine is it which Christ drinks new with his disciples in his Father's kingdom? Is it not that wine, which he and they drink *now* together when he supe with them? Oh, the Lord give thee

an understanding, that thou mayst come to the substance, feel substance, and inherit substance for ever!

"Flee from idolatry, my dearly beloved," said the apostle. 1 Cor. x. 14. What idolatry did he mean? "I speak as to wise men," said he "judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" About the outward cup and bread, might they not easily run into idolatry? but they that knew, discerned, and minded the body and blood indeed, they did not run into idolatry. "For we being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." Oh, deep, deep, indeed! The bread which comes down from heaven, *that* is the bread which gives life to the soul: and unless we eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, we have no life in us. And if we eat his flesh and drink his blood, we become one flesh with him, and bone of his bone; yea, we become of the same bread with him, and so of the one body of the living bread.

My dear friend, the Lord give thee an understanding, and open thy heart, and cause thee to grow into union and into sense of his truth; that by growing up in the truth, thou mayst come more and more to understand it, and be acquainted with it.

Thy unfeigned friend in the truth which is pure,

I. P.

Reading Jail,
3rd of Sixth Month, 1670.

To ——— ———.

THE Lord God of heaven and earth, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, knows, that we who are called Quakers have no secret things or hidden principles among us to win people to; but as we have ourselves been won to the simplicity and plainness of truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, and walk therein, so it is the single desire of our hearts to bring men thither, where they may have the demonstration

of God's Spirit, and hear the true witness speaking truth in their own consciences. And indeed it was great matter of satisfaction to our hearts, when the Lord turned us to his truth, that we found it to be no new thing, but that which we had witnessed and experienced in the days of our former profession. For we well remembered that we had been acquainted with it then; and God now gives us the true and certain sense, that all the prayers, and knowledge, and understanding of the Scriptures, faith, love, zeal, meekness, patience, humility, and whatever we then had, which was dear unto us, and precious in the eye of God, came from this Spirit of life, this principle of life, which God hath now manifested to us, and turned our minds unto. And oh that they, who yet speak against it, knew it, as the Lord hath given us to know! surely they could not then either think or speak so hardly of it as they do. But Christ was the Son of God in his appearance in flesh, whatever the wise men and professors of that age judged and spake of him. And this is the appearance and manifestation of *the same Christ* inwardly, even the same virtue, life, and power, which appeared in that body of flesh, whatever the professors of this age think or speak concerning it; and they are not guiltless before the Lord, but deeply guilty for rising up against it.

There was a precious appearance of God among that sort that were called Puritans, before there was such a rent among them by falling into several ways of worship. There was among them great sincerity, and love, and tenderness, and unity in that which was true; minding the work of God in themselves, and being sensible of grace and truth in one another's hearts. Now to desire to know the true worship, this was good; but every one that had this desire, was not acquainted with the Spirit of the Lord, nor did wait aright on him, to be led by him into the true worship, but followed the apprehensions and conceivings of their own minds upon the Scriptures. Now had these known the true Leader, they would never thus have wandered, nor have been so scattered from the Puritan state, which was better than any of these. For is it possible, if the Spirit of God

had been the Leader of these, they could thus have wandered from the truth, life, love, and sense, into a barren, dead state in comparison of that? It is true there was a sincerity and simplicity in many of them; but was not that sincerity and simplicity betrayed, and drawn out to seek the living among the dead, among dead forms, ways, and worships? For though they carried some life with them into their forms, yet by degrees the form grew, and the virtue and power of godliness decreased, and they were swallowed up in high esteem of, and contendings, each sort, for their forms; but themselves had lost what they were inwardly to God, and had inwardly received from God in the days of their former zeal and tenderness. Oh that they could see this! Oh that they could return to their Puritan state, to the sense they then had, the love and tenderness that was then in them, to the feeling of the principle of life, which they then felt, and which then wrought in them! though they then distinctly knew it not, yet they loved that which gathered their minds to God, and in which they felt ability to pray, and which opened the Scriptures and the things of God, and warmed their hearts truly and livingly in some measure. Oh that they were but there again! they might soon come further. Oh that they knew their state, as it is known in the light of the Lord, and by the Spirit of the Lord! The Lord open the true eye in them, and give them to see therewith.

L. P.

Reading Jail, 19th of Seventh Month, 1670.

To Nathaniel Stonar.

Dear Friend,

There was somewhat on my heart towards thee this morning, which I am willing in truth and uprightness to express to thee, as the Lord knoweth.

There is a great dispute between us and professors, concerning *the rule;* which they hold forth the Scriptures to be. Now truly I could wish, from the depth of love in my heart

to them, and from my desire of their good, that the Scriptures, rightly understood by them, *were* their rule; and not their own reasonings, conceivings, and apprehendings upon the Scriptures. But yet, if it were so, they must needs assent to me, that the Spirit of life,—that the truth, which lives in the heart,—that the law, written by the finger of God in the inward parts,—is nearer and more powerful, than the words, or outward relations concerning those things in the Scriptures. There is a measure of life to be received, there is the Spirit of life to be received, there is a well of life, from which pure life springs up, to be received and enjoyed by them that truly and rightly believe.

The Lord, in the gospel state, hath promised to be present with his people; not as a wayfaring man for a night, but to *dwell in them and walk in them.* Yea, if they be tempted and in danger of erring, they shall hear a voice behind them, saying, "This is the way, walk in it." Will they not grant this to be a rule, as well as the Scriptures? Nay, is not this a more full direction to the heart, in that state, than it can pick to itself out of the Scriptures? Truly, this ensuing testimony is true, which now springs up in my heart unto thee, which is this;—the Lord hath poured out his Spirit upon his sons and daughters, in and by this precious dispensation of truth, and of the pure seed, which is so despised. And the Spirit which gave forth the words is greater than the words; therefore we cannot but prize Him himself, and set Him higher in our hearts and thoughts than the words which testify of Him, though they also are very sweet and precious to our taste.

There was a measure and rule, whereunto the true minister of Christ and the believing Gentiles had attained, by which they were to walk; as is mentioned in 2 Cor. x. 13. 15. "According to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us"—"according to our rule," &c.: and in Philipians, iii. 16, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing;" as also in Galatians, vi. 15, 16, "For in Christ Jesus, neither

circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy," &c. Now consider what *that rule* was. Oh that thou mayst know it and walk thereby, as they that had received God's Spirit did! For I am assured in my heart, that if thou receive God's Spirit, and live and walk therein, thou canst not fulfil the desires of the flesh; but thou wilt find thy heart opened thereby into a true sense, understanding, and right use of the Scriptures. For the Scriptures of the New Testament were written to the saints, and cannot be truly or rightly understood or made use of, but as men come into their spirit and state.

These things are of great weight and concernment: the Lord open and guide thy heart into true satisfaction in this and other things also, from the demonstration of his own Spirit; that thou mayst be able truly to say as in his sight, Now I believe and understand things, not because this or that man hath so said, but because the Lord, who is the Teacher indeed, hath taught and assured my heart concerning the truth itself, as it is in Jesus; which I feel to be so, by its living virtue and powerful operation in and upon my heart.

This is my desire for thee, who am thy soul's true and sincere friend, who would by no means have thee deceived about any thing that concerns it.

I. P.

Reading Jail,
24th of Seventh Month, 1670.

To Widow Hemmings.

Dear Friend,

Since I last saw thee there have been many deep and serious thoughts on my heart concerning thee; and a sense of thy state as before the Lord, and breathings of heart for thee. I am sensible that the Spirit of the Lord is striving with thee, and in some measure opening thy heart towards

him and his truth; and I am sensible withal, that there is much striving against him; and many strong-holds of wisdom and reasonings in thee, which must be broken down, before truth can spring up in thy heart, and exercise its power in thee, and have full command in thee.

Now this morning when I awoke, there were three things sprang up in me, which my heart did singly and earnestly desire for thee. One was that thou mightst be led by God's Holy Spirit into the new and living covenant, where Christ is revealed, and the soul united to him as its Lord and King in a bond of indissoluble union. Another was that thou mightst daily be taught of God, and learn of him in this holy, new, pure, and everlasting covenant. The third was, that thou mightest be true and faithful to God, to obey and follow him, in whatever he teaches and requires of thee.

If thou wert but in this state thou wouldst find sweetness and rest, peace and power, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and life eternal revealed in thy own heart; and with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Now if thou come to witness Christ's appearance in spirit, and wilt become a disciple unto him, there are three things thou must apply thy heart to learn of him; which indeed are the sum of the gospel, or of what is taught in and by the gospel. The first is, to *fear God*. This is the beginning of true, heavenly wisdom, and this is the perfection and the end of wisdom also; for true wisdom not only brings into the fear, but it builds up in the fear, yea, and perfects in the fear also; according as the apostle saith, "Perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." Now this is not such a fear as man can attain by all he can do; but is the fear of the new covenant, which God puts into the hearts of his children as he quickens them and brings them up in the new covenant. This is such a fear as that those in whom it is placed, cannot depart from the Lord; nor abiding in it, err from the way of life and holiness; for all sin and transgression, all rebellion against the Lord, and grieving and quenching his Spirit, is out of this fear. Oh that

thou mightst receive this fear from the Lord, and grow up unto him daily in it!

The second, which depends upon and flows from the former, is, to *give glory to God*, in discerning his life and power, and the virtue of his Spirit and his grace, working all in thee; and so still ascribing the glory to him of all thou art, dost, or canst do: for in the day of the gospel, no flesh can glory in the presence of our God; but the Lord alone is exalted in the spirits of his children in that day. And indeed, as every one comes into the fear of the new covenant, the presence of the Lord is there, dwelling in the midst of the heart; and he is found working all therein, and bringing forth the seed of life, and working down sin, and death, and corruption. And they that are here feel their own poverty and nothingness as in themselves; and that their way to become strong in Christ, is first to become weak in themselves: and so when they are strong in him, he who is their strength is glorified and admired, and self is of no reputation or value for ever and ever; for that is cleaved to which brought down self, and that power and spirit, being cleaved to, still keeps it down.

The third is, that thou learn to *worship God* in spirit and truth. Oh this worship is precious indeed! and this is the only sort of worship which God seeketh and regardeth, among the many various kinds of worshippers which appear at this day. This worship was declared by Christ, and taught his disciples; but it has been in great measure departed from; and though many have sought after it, yet none ever could find it, but as they have learned of the Father to return to the anointing; and so to be gathered into his Spirit where Christ's name is known, and where they that meet together, worship in his name: and of a truth none know or can worship in Christ's name besides these. There have been great mistakes about worship and gatherings; they having not been in the name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, but only in a profession thereof, and an imitation of things, without the true life and power; and what is that worship and religion in the sight of the

Lord? Now that thou mayst come into this state and learn all these lessons of the Lord in the new covenant, there is one thing indispensably necessary for thee; which is, to know *the hour of God's judgment* in thy own heart, and to lie under the judgment of the Lord, bearing it till he finish it, and bring it forth unto victory. For this is the way whereby he purges and redeems the soul; to wit, by the spirit of judgment and burning. Thou must therefore wait for, and come to feel, the Spirit of the Lord near thee, discovering sin to thee, and revealing judgment against it, and executing his righteous judgment upon the evil nature in thee; that he may raise up that good and tender plant of righteousness, out of the dry and barren ground, to which his mercy is.

If thou come to know God's Spirit, and to receive it, and feel it work in thee, and its pure light shine from the fountain and spring of life, thou wilt have a quicker sense and discerning therefrom, than can arise either from words written, or from thoughts; that is, the Lord will show thee the way whereof thou doubtest, quicker than a thought can arise in thee; and the Lord will show thee evil, in a pure sense of the new nature, quicker than thou canst think or consider of any thing. And indeed this is needful; for sin lodges in the evil nature inwardly, and works, not so much by a known law set up in the mind, as by a secret nature; and if it be not resisted and withstood by another nature, it can never be overcome. Now by this judgment set up in the heart, doth God overcome and keep down sin for ever; for the judgment of God is stronger than sin, and will bring it down where his judgment is received and abode in; and that which brought it down, being kept to, will keep it down; and it being kept down, life and righteousness, even the righteous life, Spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus inwardly revealed, will be uppermost and reign over it.

Perhaps these words, at present, may be hard unto thee: but if thou come to wait on God's Holy Spirit, and to the feeling of his appearance in thy heart, and learn of him to

know what is good and what is evil in thy words, ways, worship, yea, and in thy very heart and thoughts, and also to choose the good and refuse the evil; they will grow easier and easier, and plainer and plainer, daily, as thou comest into the sense and experience of the things they mention. And thou wilt find Christ, inwardly revealed in spirit, to be very properly called the word of God, even the ingrafted word which is able to save the soul; for he is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, able to cut down all that shall appear or rise up in the heart, to resist or oppose his work.

The Lord so guide thee, manifest himself to thee, help thee, and lead thee by his Holy Spirit and power, as that thou mayst come undeniably to experience, and to be satisfied by him about these things. And mind not so much to *know*, as to be obedient and subjected to the Lord, both in thy heart and in thy conversation also, in the least thing that he makes manifest. If the Lord would show thee but this one thing,—that to use "thee" and "thou" to a particular person is proper language, and Scripture language; and that to say "you," is improper, and arose from pride, and nourisheth pride, and so is of the world, and not of the Father; and thou should bow thy spirit to him in this one thing, thou little thinkest what a work it would make within thee, and how strongly the spirit of darkness would fight against thy subjection thereto. The Lord lead thee as he seeth good, and give thee faithfully to follow; for else, if the Lord should lead in any thing, and thou not follow in that thing, his Spirit would be grieved and vexed thereby, and thy heart in danger of being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The Lord give thee the sense and savor of these things; that thou mayest thereby be kindled to wait on the Lord, to be led into the light of the living; that thou mayst live and walk with him therein, who is, and dwells, and walks with his, in the light. O house of Jacob! come ye, let us walk in the light of the Lord, and let us come up to Zion, the holy hill of God, and to the gospel Jerusalem, that

there he may teach us of his ways, and we may there learn of him to walk in his paths; for there is the place of wisdom and true understanding, which none know but those that are taught of God.

This is in true friendship and tender love to thy soul, from its friend in truth and sincerity,

I. P.

26th of Eighth Month, 1670.

To ——— ———.

FRIEND,

I have had of late some deep and serious thoughts concerning thee, and a sense of thee, as between the Lord and my own soul, yet I have not had any thing to signify or express to thee, till this morning. But somewhat this morning sprang up in my heart, sweetly and freshly, which I had pure drawings to impart to thee.

There was a quick sense of thee upon my heart, and in that sense this cry was in me:—Oh! that thou wert acquainted with the pure, eternal power of the Lord, and mightest feel his outstretched arm revealed in thee, and witness the faith which stands in that power; and, in that faith, believe and wait for what God is doing, and willing to do, in and for his children. "If ye had faith," said Christ, "but as a grain of mustard seed, ye should say to this mountain, be thou cast into the midst of the sea, and it should be so." Indeed, the true faith, the pure faith, the living faith, which stands in the power, doth remove all the mountains that are in the way, and makes the crooked ways straight, and the rough ways plain. If thou had lived in the days of Christ's flesh, and wanted outward healing, and had been willing to come to him for healing, but withal had not come with faith that he was able and willing to heal perfectly; mightest not thou have missed of that cleansing and outward health and salvation, which others met with? For did not he say, "Be it unto thee according to thy faith"? And is not he the Physician of the soul? and

is not his skill to be trusted and believed in? He that hopeth, and believeth, and waiteth, and prayeth, and fighteth the good fight of faith, which gives victory over sin, Satan, and the world—he may possibly overcome; yea, he that warreth lawfully—that is, with the spiritual weapon, which is mighty through God—he that warreth with this only, and with this constantly, shall be sure to overcome. For greater is He that is in the true believer, than he that is in the world.

Oh that thou mightest have experience of these things, and witness the banner of Christ's love and power displayed in thee, and the victories and conquests that are thereby, and the safety and peace which is under it! For of a truth, we do not speak boastingly, but are witnesses of the majesty of God's love and power, which we testify of. The Lord so enlighten and guide thee, that thou mayest obtain the desire of thy heart; for I really believe thy desire is after holiness, and after communion with the Father and the Son, and with the saints in light. Oh that thou mayest be led into the pure light of life, that there thou mayest enjoy what in this kind thou desirest!

This is from one, who singly, as in the Lord's sight, wisheth well unto thee.

I. P.

Reading Jail,
27th of Eighth Month, 1670.

To ——— ———.

Professors have long known the name of Christ, and what the Scripture relateth concerning him so named; but oh that they could once know Christ [himself,] and receive him into their vessels, and feel life flowing from him into them! Then would they indeed know Christ according to the Spirit; which knowledge quickeneth, but the literal knowledge killeth. For he that *hath* the Son, he that is in true union with him, and really changed by him, so as to

become one nature and spirit with him,—*he* hath life; but he that hath not the Son hath not the life of the Son, nor the liberty of the Son, but it is in the death of sin, and in service unto sin.

The directions from God's Holy Spirit in the Scriptures are exceedingly weighty and precious in themselves, and very proper to the several states to which they were given forth; and blessed is he who is found in the practice and observation of them. And it hath been the desire of my heart from my childhood, and still is, that I might be found walking with the Lord, according to what is there taught and prescribed to the children of God, in the several foregoing ages and generations; which things were written, and are useful, for *our* instruction also, being read by us, and heeded, in that which gives the true understanding of them.

But though this was my desire, yet in my way to attain this, I missed; for I thought that by getting the directions of Scripture into my mind, and applying myself to the strict observation of them, and praying for God's Spirit and help, I might obtain what I desired. And truly the Lord was merciful to me, and did help me, in a great measure, to walk uprightly and lowlily with him, and inoffensively before men; yet not so but that I often felt the temptations and darkness of the enemy nearer me than my rule, and in many cases knew not what to do, nor how to be resolved from the Scriptures.

At length the Lord greatly distressed me, and brought me to a fuller sense of my want of his Spirit and power, and dashed all my religion in pieces; that I was just like Babylon, for in one hour judgment and desolation came upon me; Rev. xviii. 10. and I knew not what to do without the Lord, nor which way to draw nigh to him; but then was the Lord preparing for me that day of mercy, which since, in his tender goodness, is broken in upon me. And now the eye which he hath opened in me seeth, that the gospel is a ministration of the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that he who would be his disciple indeed, must be turned to his Spirit, and receive the immediate light and

shinings of his Spirit into his vessel; and must feel the law of life, the holy laws of the new covenant, not comprehended outwardly in his mind, but written inwardly in his heart by the finger of God's Spirit. And being written in his heart, they have power over his heart, and cause him to obey them; so that, being here, he cannot possibly but fulfil the holy directions of the Scriptures, he being in that from which they came, which reveals the substance of them unto him, and makes them living and powerful in him. For indeed the law of sin and death hath power over a man so long as he liveth; but when he meets with that which kills sin and death in him, and maketh him alive to God, and he receives life in abundance in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; then the fruits of life become easy and natural to him, and the fruits and ways of sin, unbelief, and disobedience unnatural: and here the yoke is easy and the burden light, and none of the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ grievous. But take them merely out of the letter, not feeling the Spirit leading into them, and quickening and enabling to the performance of them, oh how heavy, how hard are they! How impossible to believe aright, hope aright, pray aright, walk aright, watch aright over the heart, fight against the enemies, lusts, and corruptions aright! &c. On the other hand, how pleasant is the way of life in the covenant of life, in the power and virtue of life, and ministered from the Spirit of our God! And here he is praised, and victory over his enemies witnessed, and peace with him enjoyed in the pure seed of life; blessed be the name of our God for ever! For the letter, or description of things, is not the way; but the life is the way, the Spirit the way, the power the way, the truth as it is in Jesus the way, which none can truly and rightly know, but as they are ingrafted into and formed in him, and he formed in them; this is only obtained, witnessed, and preserved, in the soul's union and communion with, and obedience to, his Spirit and power inwardly revealed and made manifest.

Friend, there is somewhat further in my heart towards thee, which I have the true and certain sense of, which is

this: The Lord, who is near thee with his Holy Spirit and power, hath been begetting life in thee, and hath, at times, given thee a true sense and discerning, in some measure; but there is also somewhat near thee, which watcheth to destroy and devour what the Holy Spirit of God begets in thee, and to beget another sense and belief in thee, different therefrom, and indeed contrary thereto. Now, it behooveth thee exceedingly to watch, and to pray to the Lord for help; for the life of thy soul depends upon the one of these, and death and destruction will inevitably break in upon thee, and have power over thee, if thou hearken to the other. Whom doth the enemy so much strive to devour as the sheep and inheritance of the Lord? And they are only preserved in the Lord's way, and in subjection to his Spirit. Oh, how many hath the enemy betrayed and deceived of the life of their souls! how many men's spirits are now cankered, and the good long ago eaten out of them, who had once some tenderness and upright breathings after the Lord! but now their silver is become dross, and their wine mixed with water, so that the very nature and property of it is changed: the salt having lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? I mention this to thee, that thou mayest watch and pray; that thou thyself do not lose thy savor and sense and tenderness which the Lord at some times kindleth in thee, by hearkening to the subtle reasonings and suggestions of another spirit, either in thyself or others.

This is in the nakedness of my heart, as in the Lord's sight, and in the truth of friendship towards thee.

I. P.

27th of Ninth Month, 1670.

To Widow Hemmings.

Friend,

Well may there doubts and scruples arise in the minds of persons concerning prayer, as they come to any sense or touch of truth from God's Holy Spirit; that duty having been performed and practised so long from the fleshly

mind and nature, and not in the leading, will, and compass of God's Holy Spirit and power. And those who doubt therein cannot be satisfied, till the Lord open their spirits and make the thing manifest to them; yet this is most certain that all prayer, all true prayer to God, is in and from his Holy Spirit; and whatsoever is otherwise is not accepted of the Father. The promise, indeed, is to the prayer in faith, and to the Holy Spirit; but not to the prayer of the fleshly birth, will, or wisdom. Therefore the great care and concern in prayer is, that that which is of God pray unto the Father, in the quickenings and motions of his own Spirit. For the dead cannot praise God, nor can the dead truly pray unto him. And truly, in the forbearing praying, there can be no peace, for we are to pray continually; nor in praying in a formal way without life, without God's Spirit—who gives to pray, and who makes intercession—can there be any peace within;—rather accusation and anguish to that mind, which, desiring to pray aright, yet knows not how so to do. But it is manifest prayer is not in the time, will, or power of the creature, for it is a gift of God, and the ability lodges in his Spirit; it is not ours, but as given of his Spirit, which, therefore, is to be waited upon, when it will move and breathe in us, and so give us the ability of calling upon the Father, and the power of prevailing with the Father, in the name, and through the life of the Son.

Now as to thy queries, I shall answer in plainness, as the Lord shall please to open my heart.

As to the first: Whenever the creature finds breathings to the Father from a sense of its wants, these are not to be stopped, but to be offered up in that from which the breathings come. For there is no true sense of one's condition, or of one's wants, but from the Spirit of the Lord; and the Lord gives this sense, that the soul might feel its need of him, and cry to him; and every sigh and groan that is thus offered up to him is accepted of him, and prevails with him for good towards that soul, which it shall certainly receive, as it comes to know the Lamb of God, and follow him in

the leadings of his good and holy Spirit. And in particular, it ought to pray for the appearance of God's Spirit and power; and if it do already taste somewhat of it, it ought to pray for more of the Spirit, and that it may distinguish the requests that rise up in the heart, whether they come from God's Holy Spirit and will, or from the fleshly nature and will. For the wrong birth also desires the kingdom, and would have the kingdom, and prays for the kingdom, and strives for the kingdom; but it prays amiss, and it strives amiss, even so as it never shall obtain, the kingdom being appointed for, and given to, another.

To the second: Those that do not know, nor are sensible partakers of the Spirit, yet feeling their want thereof, and true desires after it, ought to offer up those desires to God; and keeping in that which begets those desires, they shall not long be ignorant of God's Spirit, but find that God is more willing to give it than a parent to give necessary things to his children. But those that have prayed long for the Spirit, yet have not hitherto received it, have just cause to question the nature and ground of their prayers; since God is so ready to give the Spirit to his children. For doth a child ask bread of his father for many years, and not receive it? Oh, consider this thing! If the child ask the Spirit aright, it is impossible but he should receive some proportion of it from the Father, so much as is necessary to his present state. God doth require his children to perform every thing to him in and with his Spirit, knowing they can do nothing right without it; and surely he will not require duties of them, and withhold that from them, without which, they cannot acceptably perform these duties to him.

To the third: A notion that all the soul's supplies are from the Father is not a sufficient ground of prayer; for the false birth may, and often doth, pray so; but a true feeling of the thing is a sufficient ground, if the heart and mind keep within the limits of the feeling, and offer up no more than what ariseth there; for truly, that is from the Spirit, of the Spirit, and in the Spirit, wherever it is found. And oh! that every one who hath any true sense of God might

wait on him, to savor *this little* which ariseth from God, from [amidst] the multitude of his thoughts, words, and desires, which are from another root, even from the flesh, and are of a fleshly nature, neither are of value, nor avail with the Lord; but the birth of life, the sensible breathings of his own life, in the poorest and weakest babe, are always of esteem, and prevail with the Father.

To the fourth: The creature may misapprehend its duty, may have a wrong sense, apprehending *that* to be its duty which *is not*, and may not apprehend *that* to be its duty which *is;* and so, if the sense be wrong, then the act of obedience (according to this wrong sense) is wrong also, and is not accepted with the Father. It is true, prayer is of God, and is a duty; not *all* prayer, but prayer after that manner that the Lord requires, which is in the true sense, and within the limits of the true Spirit and power—praying always in the Holy Ghost. The pure prayer, the pure breathings of God's child, of the true birth, is always within the limit which God hath prescribe. Therefore watch unto prayer, watch unto God's preparing the heart by the motion and virtue of his good Spirit, and offer up the breathings that then arise; and wait to distinguish between the desires which arise from the fleshly part, and the desires which arise from the spiritual and heavenly part. For the first nature is earthly; but the second nature, the nature which is from the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, is pure and heavenly; and such are all the desires and breathings, that spring from that nature in the vessel. And as thou comest into that nature, and into that Spirit from which the nature proceeds, thou wilt truly distinguish concerning prayer, concerning faith, concerning love, and all other spiritual things; and wilt know Him who is truth and no lie, who deceives not, but preserves that mind which is given up to him, and abides in him, out of all error and deceit.

Thou seemest also to be disturbed about some other duties as well as prayer. If the Lord have begun to put a stop to the workings of flesh in thee, and thou be subject to him

therein, and cease from thine own willings and workings, and wait on him to be taught to perform things aright, this is his love to thee; and if thou come to feel the leadings of his Spirit further, and follow him, thou wilt have cause to bless his name, as many others have, whom in this day he hath thus led. Indeed, flesh should be silent before him. Alas! what room is there for his Spirit and power, when there is such a multitude of thoughts, and workings, and reasonings, such a noise of flesh in many hearts and spirits? Happy is he who feels flesh silent, who comes to an end of his own willing and running, though that is a time of great distress, when the full mind is emptied and brought low; but then He that shows mercy is near, and the day of mercy is not far off to that soul.

The Lord raise up that in thee, which is of him; and so guide and order thy heart, that it may long and cry after him, and be heard and satisfied by him.

I. P.

28th of Ninth Month, 1670.

To Elizabeth Walmsley.

My very dear Friend,

Many are the trials, afflictions, and temptations, which the Lord seeth good to exercise us with, for the purifying and making us white, that he may honor his name in us and through us: but this promise stands sure in the seed, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And if our God be with us and for us, what can prevail against the work and design of his love and power towards us;

I am deeply sensible of thy condition, feeling it even in the tender and melting love of my heart towards thee; and this word sprang in me to thee, Look not out, but trust in the Lord, who can make things easier than they seem likely to be; and will certainly carry *his* through the hardest things which he suffers to befall them.

Oh! the Lord keep all in his pure innocency, out of the

earthly, contriving wisdom, which saith, Save thyself, avoid this dreadful brunt, this stroke of the cross; which it is easy to hearken to, if the mind be not kept to that eye and that wisdom, which discovers the tempter, and instructeth the bird to escape his snare.

My dear love is to thee, and to all faithful Friends. The Lord keep you from hearkening to the enemy, and make you faithful to him, in the pure innocency and heavenly wisdom which is of him; for truth triumphs over deceit, and the life of the Lamb on the cross, reigns and triumphs over death: glory to Him who hath overcome in his person, and who teacheth us to overcome, through faith in his power,—and from the overflowings of the conquering life in our hearts, which first brings down that which is contrary to truth, and then reigns in the truth.

Thy friend in the love which never dies, and in the truth which changes not,

I. P.

Catsgrove,
14th of Tenth Month, 1670.

To Elizabeth Stonar.

Dear Friend,

I am sensible that the Lord hath visited thee with his power, reaching to thy heart in the demonstration of his own Spirit, and that thy heart hath answered, and said in the inward of thy soul, It is God's truth indeed. Now so far as God hath reached to thee, so far it behooves thee to confess him, his truth, and people before men, and to give up in obedience and subjection of spirit to the Lord. And if thou say in the simplicity of thy heart, to any that have any tenderness, Thus it is with me; I believe from my heart this or this is of God; what shall I do? shall I give up in obedience thereto, or shall I disobey the Lord, grieve his Spirit, and wound my own soul? This will reach that which is of God in any; and this will wound and trouble that which is not of God.

The Lord guide thee, and pity thee, and help thee in thy straits, and doubts, and fears, and troubles, both in reference to thyself and mother. God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit, in the gospel of his Son, that I have not sought myself, but your good; and that not of myself either, but in the leadings and drawings of his Holy Spirit. And I gave thy husband a warning, in true and tender love; though I knew well enough how hard it would be to his spirit in its present state, and what a bitter enemy he might become to me for telling him the truth. I did it not unadvisedly, but in the weight of my spirit before the Lord; and I heartily wish that he were not deceived in heart concerning his own state, but truly knew it as it is.

Thy soul's true and sincere-hearted friend,

I. P.

POSTSCRIPT.

There is light, which enlightens the soul, or it remains in darkness: "Ye were darkness," said the apostle, "but now are ye light in the Lord." Now no man can become light in the Lord, unless his nature and spirit be renewed, and changed out of darkness into light. Now the question is, what this light is, and where it is to be met with. Are the Scriptures, then, this light? or do they testify of this light? If they testify of this light, then, the light is to be come to, and the soul to be enlightened by it. And he that comes to this light, and is enlightened by it, and walks in the pure shinings thereof, he becomes a child of light; but he that is not enlightened and changed by it, is yet a child of darkness, notwithstanding whatsoever he learns, professeth, or practiseth, by imitation from the Scriptures. This is a weighty matter.

Oh come! be not wedded to your own ways, nor prejudiced against what God hath taught others; but let things be fairly scanned, that all things may be proved, and that which is good held fast; for truth will not lose ground by

being tried; but darkness is afraid of the light, because it has a secret sense that it cannot stand before it.

I. P.

16th of Twelfth Month, 1670.

To ——— ———.

The enemy kindles a great distress in the mind, by stirring up an earnest desire, and a sense of a seeming necessity to *know*. When a motion ariseth, how shall I do, to know whether it be of God or no? For if it be of God, it ought to be obeyed; and if it be not of God, it ought to be resisted; but what shall I do, who cannot tell what it is? I must of necessity fall, either into disobedience to God's Spirit, or into the snares of the enemy. Thus the enemy raiseth up a strength in the reasoning part, even unanswerable there. But what if it were better for thee, at present, to be darkened about these things, than as yet to know? Can that possibly be? will the strong reason readily say. Yes, that it may, in many respects. There is somewhat else would live and be acting in thee, if the clear and heavenly knowledge were given; and thou wouldst be centring in self, that which thou receivedst from God; yea, thou wouldst miss of the way of true knowledge, and never learn in every state to be content, nor know the pure way and actings of life in such a state. Truly, this is not the way of the child's knowing; but the child knows, in resignation and subjection of its very knowledge; and if there appear ever so great a necessity of knowledge, and yet knowledge be not given, it sinks in fear and humility, into the will of the pure seed; and *there* somewhat springs up (unknown to the natural wisdom, and not in the way of man's wisdom), which at seasons preserves and bears it up in such a state. But this is a great mystery; yet sensibly experienced by the true travellers at this day.

Therefore retire out of all necessities, according to the apprehension of the reasoning mind; and judge that only

necessary, which God, in his eternal wisdom and love, proportions out unto us. And when thou comest hither, thou wilt come to thy rest; and as thou abidest here, thou wilt abide in thy soul's true rest, and know the preciousness of that lesson, and of whom thou art to learn it, even *in every state to be content.*

To ——— ———.

WHAT is Paul? what is Apollos? or what is Cephas? It is one and the same pure life and word of power which springs in all the holy brethren, whom God hath sanctified and prepared to give forth the sound of his holy trumpet. It is the Lord himself who gives forth the true and certain sound: great is the company of those whom he hath chosen and sent forth to publish it; none of whom can be despised in their message, without despising Him that sent them; for he sends forth the least and weakest, as well as the greatest.

Oh, take heed of that nature and spirit in thee which desires and seeks after a sign! It is the evil and adulterous generation which seeks after a sign. But wait to meet with that inwardly, which changeth the heart, and renews the mind to God; which teacheth to love the Lord God with all the heart, soul, mind, and spirit, that so true life from and in him may be witnessed. And as for *being as one of us*, thou must be formed so by the Lord, by being inwardly changed and renewed by the Spirit and power of the Lord, ere thou canst witness true unity with us. If thou feel the principle of truth in thy own heart, and in *that* know and own us, and so come among us, and join to us in the truth, and keep faithful to the principle, thou wilt never be in danger of leaving us, as they that depart from the principle in their own hearts may soon and easily do.

To ——— ———

FRIEND,

Hearken to a word of advice which is in my heart to thee; it may be of great use to thee, if the Lord open thy spirit, and cause it to sink in. It is this:—

Wait on the Lord, that thou mayst, from him, feel the right limit to the mind in reading the Scriptures; for the mind of man is busy and active, willing to be running beyond its bounds, guessing at the meaning of God's Spirit, and imagining of itself, unless the Lord limit it. Therefore read in fear, and wait understandingly to distinguish between God's opening to thee words concerning the kingdom, and the things of the kingdom, and thy own apprehensions about them; that the one may be always cast by, and the other always embraced by thee. And always wait God's season: do not presume to understand a thing, before he *give* thee the understanding of it: and know also, that he alone is able to preserve the true sense and knowledge in thee; that thou mayst live dependently upon him for thy knowledge, and never "lean to thy own understanding." Little dost thou know what it hath cost us, to have our own understanding and wisdom broken down; and how demonstratively by this Spirit the Lord opens scriptures to us (yea, the things themselves, which the Scriptures speak of), ever since he hath taught us to deny our own understanding, and to lean upon his Spirit and wisdom.

The Lord guide thee by his certain, infallible Spirit, into the certain, infallible, everlasting way of life, that by the shinings of his light, Spirit, and power in thee, thou mayst see light, and enjoy life. For if thou didst certainly and infallibly understand all the words, descriptions, and testimonies concerning the thing in the Scriptures; yet it is one thing to understand words, testimonies, and descriptions; and it is another matter to understand, know, enjoy, possess, and live in *that* which the words relate to, describe, and bear witness of.

And friend, if thou wilt be an inward Jew, and know and

understand the laws of life, the laws of the new covenant, thou must read them in those tables, where God writes them in and by the new covenant. Indeed, by reading in the letter, thou mayst read testimonies concerning the Spirit and his ministration; but thou must read in the Spirit, if ever thou come rightly to understand the letter. And the end of words is to bring men to the knowledge of things, beyond what words can utter. So learn of the Lord to make a right use of the Scriptures, which is by esteeming them in their place, and prizing *that* above them, which is above them. The "eternal life," the Spirit, the power, the fountain of living waters, the everlasting, pure well, is above the words concerning it. This, the believer is to witness in himself, and to draw water with joy out of it.

I. P.

To the Friend of Francis Fines.

Friend,

After some deep exercise of spirit concerning thee, under great grief of heart for thee, I felt a constraint of love, forcing these following considerations from me, to lay before thee.

As for William Penn, thou didst not make mention of him to me in thy former letter. And as to thy charge upon him, that he denies the "Trinity," redemption by Christ's blood, and imputed righteousness, thou mayst read his apology touching those things, which it is just thou shouldst seriously weigh, as in God's sight; and then perhaps thou wilt not so resolutely charge him as now thou dost.

Christ is made unto us righteousness, by faith in his blood, and by faith in his Spirit; and he that doth not believe in his Spirit, and receives not instruction and help from his Spirit to believe, cannot believe aright in his blood. All that is of Christ is righteous; all that is of Christ, the righteous and holy root, is righteous and holy, wherever it is found. And by Christ, that which is truly

holy and righteous is brought up in us, and we forgiven and washed from our sins and iniquities for his name's sake. And the receiving of the pardon of sins is precious, and the bringing forth in the new life is precious also.

I am satisfied in God's Spirit, that that which I have written in the last I sent to thee, is the sum and substance of true religion; the sum and substance whereof doth not stand in getting a notion of Christ's righteousness, but in feeling the power of the endless life, receiving the power, and being changed by the power. And where Christ is, *there* is his righteousness. He that hath the Son hath life and righteousness; but he that hath not the Son hath not life nor righteousness. And where Christ is not, *there* is not his righteousness; but only a notion thereof, from apprehensions formed out of the Scriptures by man's wisdom, which should be destroyed. I would not have thy knowledge here, nor thy standing here, nor thy faith here; but in the truth and life itself.

Christ was anointed and sent of God, a Saviour, to destroy the works of the devil, to break down all rule and authority contrary to God in man; for his work is in the heart. There he quickens, there he raiseth, there he brings into death that which is to die, raising the seed immortal, and bringing the creature into subjection to it. Now, to feel the power that doth this, and to feel this wrought by the power, this is far beyond all talk about justification and righteousness. Hither would I have thee come, out of the talk, out of the outwardness of knowledge, into the thing itself, and into the trueness of the new and living knowledge, which is witnessed here.

There is a power in Christ to mortify and overcome sin in the very root; it is not however overcome, but in the revealing of this power; nor is the soul justified, but in and by the working of this power. So that justification is not the first thing, but the power of life, in and through which (revealed in Christ) the soul is both justified and sanctified, through the working of the faith, which is from the power. And here salvation is felt nigh indeed, to those that truly

fear the Lord; and glory dwells in the land which he hath redeemed. There, mercy and truth do indeed meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. Yea, truth, there, springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven, &c. And here, the heavenly place in Christ is sat down in, towards which is the travel of the disciple. For saith Christ to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place," and "I will come again," and translate you thither. But the disciples do not come to this place before their travel, or before any works of righteousness which God hath wrought in them.

Therefore he that will be justified by Him must abide in the faith, where the justification is. The Father justifies what is of his own life in the Son, and the Son in his life; and the Son justifies what is of the Father in us (what is of the Father's nature, the Father's spirit, the Father's life), and justifies us from that, by his blood, from which we cannot otherwise be justified. Oh, how precious it is, to see and feel this in the true light, where the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin! Here is no covenant for us of ourselves to perform; but the true self-denial is witnessed, wherein the covenant is performed; and Christ the life, Christ the power, Christ the righteousness and wisdom of God, working all in us; and we gathered into him, and living and working in him, by the faith which is of him. And here is *free-will* indeed, even of the will which was bound and captivated before. And here is the *election* known, which obtains; and *the obedience and sufferings of Christ*, not looked upon as superfluous, but highly prized, and looked upon as of inestimable value.

Do we cry up works against the workman? man's grace and righteousness against God's? conformity to Christ against Christ? or make a Christ, a righteousness, a Saviour of our conformity? Oh! how wilt thou do, when God shall plead with thee for these things? Also that charge of thine on us, that we deny the person of Christ, and make him nothing but a light or notion, a principle in the heart of man, is very unjust and untrue; for we own

that appearance of him in his body of flesh, his sufferings and death, and his sitting at the Father's right hand in glory: but then we affirm, that there is no true knowledge of him, or union with him, but in the seed or principle of his life in the heart; and that *therein* he appears, subdues sin, and reigns over it, in those that understand and submit to the teaching and government of his Spirit.

But we cannot set the manhood above the life, and make *that* the main or chief in the work of redemption, and the life and Spirit of his Godhead but supporting, enabling, and carrying him up in that great undertaking.

Consider, I pray thee, if what thou sayest be not contrary to the Scriptures? Was the work laid by the Father upon the *manhood*, or upon the *Son*, who, in the life and by the life, was "mighty to save"? *Who* took up the *manhood*? Was it not the *Son*? "Lo! I come," saith he, "a *body* hast thou prepared *me*." And was it not *he*, that laid down his glory, and made himself of no reputation, but came in the form of a servant (took upon him man's nature)—did not *he* do the work in man's nature? Did not the eternal Spirit sanctify the body in the womb? Did not the eternal Power act in him all along? Yea, did not the eternal Spirit offer the body to God as a sacrifice? For the manhood would fain have avoided the cup ("Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!"), but the Spirit taught him to be subject to the will of the Father herein. So that his giving up to death was rather to be attributed to his eternal Spirit than to his manhood; for *that* was the chief in the work, and not merely assistant to him. And doth not Christ confess as much to his Father, when he saith, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father! glorify thou me with thy own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Though we are willing to honor the manhood of Christ, with the honor which the Father hath honored it with; yet we cannot honor it in the first place, and attribute redemption to it in the first place, making the Spirit and life of God but supporting, assisting, and carrying on there-

in. For "God was in Christ," and it was his power, life, and virtue did all in him, as it is a measure of the same life which doth all in us; in which measure we partake of his death, and not only so, but also of his life and resurrection. For he is "the resurrection and the life," (which we cannot deny) and if by his death we be reconciled to God, "much more shall we be saved by his life." And if righteousness be revealed in us, imputed to us, and we partake of it, as we come into his death; much more shall we partake of it, as we come into his life.

It is precious indeed to hear of Christ without; but it is more precious to feel him within; where the wisdom of our Solomon, his love, his riches, his treasures of life, and the glory of his kingdom, and order of his family, and food of his children and of his servants, are witnessed and revealed on his holy mountain; where he makes the feast of fat things to his, where the bread and wine of the kingdom is eaten and drunk abundantly, and the streams of the river of his own pleasures water his garden and refresh his heritage.

I have looked over all the scriptures quoted by thee, and find not one of them proving the thing thou assertest; that is, attributing redemption properly to the manhood, and consequently improperly, in the second place, only as an assistant, to the Spirit and life of the Godhead. But if thou wouldst rightly distinguish, it were more proper to make the Word (or Life, which was in the beginning) the agent, which did all; and that body which the Father prepared and sanctified, the form of a servant or garment, in and through which the life, being clothed with it, did act. Now, the Jews did disdain Christ, as a man, in that his low appearance: therefore is the glory still given to "the man Christ Jesus;" but not to take the honor from the Son, who was God, and who saved by his Godhead, by the life, virtue, and power thereof. "I, even I, am the Lord," saith Jehovah, "and beside me there is no Saviour." The Word eternal, which made all, redeemeth all that are redeemed: that body of flesh was that wherein he appeared. And so what he did in it was attributed to his manhood (and the

man Christ Jesus did all that is attributed to him in the Scriptures), but not in the first place:—thus I speak for thy sake, and sometimes, upon necessity, to help to scatter the darkness which is seated in men's minds in this particular, which is very gross; many men having heaped unto themselves dark mountains, from their own imaginings and conceivings, upon which they stumble: and so reading the Scriptures out of the pure life wherein they were written, they gather not the true food, but food of their own imagining and inventing therefrom; and so their table becomes their snare.

And whereas thou chargest us with making Christ only a pattern, not a Saviour;—indeed, it is not so in God's sight; for we own Christ to be a Saviour: but we lay the main stress upon the life, which took upon it the manhood. And that life, wherever it appears, is of a saving nature, and doth save: the least measure of it is of the nature of the rock, and he proves a rock to them that feel him, and whose minds are staid upon him. Yet none, in the measure of this life, can deny the appearance of the fulness of life in that body of flesh, and what he did therein towards the redemption and salvation of mankind.

O pure, spotless Lamb of God! how precious was thy sacrifice in the eye of the Father! how acceptable a ransom for all mankind! For in the free, full, and universal love of the Father, "he tasted death for every man."

I. P.

To the Lady Conway.

Dear Friend,

As I was lately retired in spirit and waiting upon the Lord, having a sense on me of thy long, sore, and deep affliction and distress; there arose a scripture in my heart to lay before thee; namely, Heb. xii. 5, 6, 7. which, I entreat thee, to call for a Bible and hear read, before thou proceedest to what follows.

O my friend! after it hath pleased the Lord in tender mercy to visit us, and turn our minds from the world and ourselves towards him, and to beget and nourish that which is pure and living, of himself, in us; yet notwithstanding this, there remains somewhat at first, yea, and perhaps for a long time, which is to be searched out by the light of the Lord, and brought down and subdued by his afflicting hand. When there is, indeed, somewhat of a holy will formed in the day of God's power; and the soul, in some measure, begotten and brought forth to live to God, in the heavenly wisdom; yet all the earthly will and wisdom is not thereby presently removed; but there are hidden things, of the old nature and spirit, still remaining; which, perhaps, appear not, but sink inward into their root, that they may save their life; which man cannot possibly find out in his own heart, but as the Lord reveals them to him. But how doth the Lord find them out? Oh consider! his "fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." By his casting into the furnace of affliction, the fire searcheth. The deep, sore, distressing affliction, which rends and tears the very inwards, finds out both the seed and the chaff, purifying the pure gold and consuming the dross; and then, at length, the quiet state is witnessed, and the quiet fruit of righteousness brought forth, by the searching and consuming nature and operation of the fire. Oh that thy soul may be tried unto victory over all that is not of the pure life in thee! and that thou mayest wait to feel the pure seed, or measure of life in thee, and die into the seed, feeling death unto all that is not of the seed in thee! and that thou mayest feel life, healing, refreshment, support, and comfort from the God of thy life, in the seed;—and nowhere else, nor at any time, but as the Lord pleaseth to administer it to thee there. Oh! the Lord guide thee daily, and keep thy mind to him; at least, looking towards the holy place of the springing of his life and power in thy heart. Look unto him. Help, pity, salvation, will arise in his due time; but it will not arise from any thing thou canst do or think; and faith will spring, and patience be given, and hope in the

tender Father of mercy, and a meek and quiet spirit will be witnessed; and the Lamb's nature springing up and opening in thee, from his precious seed, which will excel in nature, kind, degree, and virtue, all the faith, patience, hope, meekness, &c., which thou, or any else, otherwise can attain unto. Oh! look not at thy pain or sorrow, how great soever; but look from them, look off them, look beyond them, to the Deliverer! whose power is over them, and whose loving, wise, and tender Spirit is able to do thee good by them. And if the *outward* afflictions work out an exceeding weight of glory, oh what shall the *inward* do for those, who are humbly, brokenly, and faithfully exercised before the Lord by them! Oh! wait to feel the seed, and the cry of thy soul in the breathing life of the seed, to its Father, with its sweet, kindly, and natural subjection to him. And wait for the risings of the power in thy heart, in the Father's seasons, and for faith in the power; that thou mayst feel inward healing, of all the inward wounds which the Lord makes in thy soul, through his love to thee for thy good.

If thou wilt receive the kingdom that cannot be shaken, thou must wait to have that discovered in thee, which may be shaken; and the Lord arising terribly to shake the earth, and it removed out of its place as a cottage, and the heavens also rolled up like a scroll. And while the Lord is doing this, he will be hiding thee in the hollow of his hand (thy mind still retiring to the seed), and will, in these troublesome and dismal times, inwardly be forming the new heavens and the new earth, wherein, when they are brought forth and established, dwells righteousness. The Lord lead thee, day by day, in the right way, and keep thy mind staid upon him, in whatever befalls thee; that the belief of his love and hope in his mercy, when thou art at the lowest ebb, may keep up thy head above the billows; and that thou mayst go on in the disciple's state, learning righteousness and holiness of Him, who teacheth to deny and put off unholiness and unrighteousness, and to know, em-

brace and put on newness of life, and the holiness and righteousness thereof.

The Lord God of my life be with thee, preserving and ordering thy heart for the great day of his love and mercy; which will come in the appointed season, when the heart is fully exercised and fitted by the Lord for it, and will not tarry.

I. P.

To ——— ———

Dear Friend,

Thy condition cannot but be weak and dark, until the light of life arise in thee, and the power of the Lord overcome and subdue the power of darkness, which strives to keep the seed of life in the grave and bonds of death.

It is the Lord's mercy, to give thee breathings after life, and cries unto him against that which oppresseth thee; and happy wilt thou be, when he shall fill thy soul with that which he hath given thee to breathe after. Only let thy heart wait for strength to trust him with the season; for his long tarrying is thy salvation, and the destruction of those enemies, which, while any strength remains in them, will never suffer thee and thy God to dwell uninterruptedly together. Therefore they must needs die, and He who hath the power to kill them, knows the way; which, to the appearing of thy sense, will be as if he meant to kill the life of *thy soul*, and not of *them*. But lie still under his hand, and be content to be unable to judge concerning his ways and workings in thy heart; and thou shalt at times feel an inward leaven of life from his Holy Spirit, whereby he will change and transform thy spirit into his likeness, in some measure, for the present. And though it be quickly gone again, and the whole land so overspread with enemies, that there is no sight of redemption or the Redeemer left, but the soul in a worse condition than before; yet be not troubled: for if troubles abound, and there be tossing, and storms, and tempests, and no peace, nor any thing visible left to support; yet lie still, and sink beneath,

till a secret hope stir, which will stay the heart in the midst of all these, until the Lord administer comfort, who knows how and what relief to give to the weary traveller, that knows not where it is, nor which way to look, nor where to expect a path.

How shall I speak to thee, how shall I mourn over thee? Oh that thou mayest be upheld to the day of God's mercy to thy soul! and be gathered, out of all such knowledge, as thou canst comprehend or contain in what is natural, into the feeling of life; that thou mayest know the difference, between living upon somewhat received from God, and having God live with thee, and administer life to thee at his pleasure; thou being kept in the nothingness, emptiness, poverty, and perfect resignation of spirit.

This counsel is to thee, through a poor, weak vessel,

I. P.

To ——— ———.

Who is able to undergo the crosses and afflictions, either inward or outward, which befall those, whom God draws out of the spirit of this world and path of destruction, into the way of eternal rest and peace? Yet the Lord is able to uphold that which feels its weakness, and daily waits on him for support under the heaviness of the cross.

I know, dear heart, thy outward trials cannot but be sharp and bitter; and I know also, that the Lord is able to sustain thee under them, and cause thee to stand thy ground; that thou give not advantage to that spirit, which hereby would draw from the Lord, and from the way of life and happiness. Oh that thou couldst dwell in the knowledge and sense of this! even that the Lord beholds thy sufferings with an eye of pity; and is able not only to uphold thee under them, but also to do thee good by them; and to bring forth that life and wisdom in thee by means thereof, to which he will give dominion over that spirit which grieves and afflicts thee, in his due season. Therefore

grieve not at thy lot, be not discontented, look not out at the hardness of thy condition; but when the storm and matters of vexation are sharp, look up to him who can give meekness and patience, can lift up thy head over all, and cause thy life to grow and be a gainer by all. If the Lord God did not help us by his mighty arm, how often should we fall and perish! and if the Lord God help thee proportionably to thy condition of affliction and distress, thou wilt have no cause to complain, but to bless his name. He is exceedingly good, and gracious, and tender-hearted, and doth not despise the afflictions of the afflicted, for his name's sake, in any kind.

This is in tender love towards thee, with breathings to my Father, that his pleasant plant may not be crushed in thee, by the foot of pride and violence; but may overgrow it, and flourish the more because of it.

From thy truly loving friend in the truth, and for the truth's sake,

I. P.

To ——— ———.

It is of the infinite mercy and compassion of the Lord, that his pure love visiteth any of us; and it is by the preservation thereof alone, that we stand. If He leave us at any time, but one moment, what are we? and who is there that provoketh Him not to depart? Let *him* throw the first stone at him that falls.

In the truth itself, in the living power and virtue, there is no offence; but that part which is not perfectly redeemed, hath still matter for the temptation to work upon, and may be taken in the snare. Let him that stands, take heed lest he fall; and in the bowels of pity, mourn over and wait for the restoring of him that is fallen. That which is so apt to be offended, is the same with that which falls. Oh! do not reason in the high-mindedness, against any that turn aside from the pure Guide; but fear, lest the unbelieving and fleshly-wise part get up in thee also. Oh know the

weakness of the creature in the withdrawings of the life! and the strength of the enemy in that hour! and the free grace and mercy which alone can preserve! and thou wilt rather wonder that *any* stand, than that *some* fall.

When the pure springs of life open in the heart, immediately the enemy watcheth his opportunity to get entrance; and many times finds entrance soon after—the soul little fearing or suspecting him, having lately felt such mighty, unconquerable strength; and yet, how often then doth he get in, and smite the life down to the ground! and what may he not do with the creature, unless the Lord graciously help!

Oh! great is the mystery of godliness, the way of life narrow, the travel to the land of rest long, hard, and sharp; it is easy miscarrying, it is easy stepping aside at any time; it is easy losing the Lord's glorious presence; unless the defence about it, by his Almighty arm, be kept up. There is a time for the Lord's taking down the fence from his own vineyard, because of transgression, and then the wild boar may easily break in. Ah! who tastes not of this in some measure? and what hinders, that he taste not of it in a greater measure?

Ah! turn in from the fleshly wisdom and reasonings, unto the pure river of life itself; and wait there, to have that judged which hath taken offence; lest, if it grow stronger in thee, it draw thee from the life, which alone is able to preserve thee; and so thou also fall.

This is in dear love to thee: retire from that part which looketh out, and feel the inward virtue of that which can restore and preserve thee.

I. P.

To Widow Hemmings.

My dear Friend,

Whom I have always truly and faithfully loved as in the sight of the Lord, and to whom my love in the Lord still continues.

Since I heard of thy illness and weakness, by M. S., whom I desired to visit thee, I have had an earnest desire to see thee; and have been considering how to effect it, but cannot with any convenience at present, as my friend T. E., the bearer hereof, can further inform thee. But the desires of my heart to the God of my life are, that he would give thee a visit in his tender pity, and guide and help thee to stay thy mind upon himself, in his most precious truth; of which he hath not only given thee a taste, but, many times, a full sense and experience.

O my dear friend! that nothing might come between thy soul and God's truth; that thy comfort, peace, and joy might be full, and that thou mightst lay down thy head quietly in the bosom of Him who loves thee, and accepts the sincere desires of thy heart towards him; as I have always told thee, and as is still true concerning thee. Mind not temptations nor accusations, nor the many noises the enemy will make in thee and against thee, to the Lord; but wait to feel truth and life springing in thy heart from the holy well, and to hear the still voice of the Spirit of the Lord; and he will testify his love to thee, and speak peace.

Oh! the tender bowels of my heavenly Father relieve thee; and gather thee inwardly in thither, and preserve thee there, where the enemy cannot break in upon thee. Look not upon thy sins, even since thou hast known the truth, wherein thou mightest have met with strength against and preservation from sin, and have been in some measure blessed by the Lord; but wait to feel somewhat inwardly, wherein God appears and breathes, and gathers, and receives, and eases of the loads, fears, doubts, troubles, temptations, and accusations, &c.; and the Lord God of my life and tender mercies, which he hath made sure to my soul in the everlasting covenant, give thee solid peace and consolation in the Son of his love, through the measure of his grace and truth springing in thy heart, and staying thy mind upon him.

Oh! feel the seed, and the faith which springs from the

seed, which gives victory over the enemy, and all his mysterious workings in the heart.

Thy friend, in the truest and most sincere love,

I. P.

To Catherine Pordage.

Friend,

In truth of heart and tender love to thee, it is with me to return answers to the chief passages of thy letter, as briefly as I may.

It hath not been my work, to bring thee out of esteem or into esteem of persons. The Lord guide thee into true judgment, and keep thee out of judging, except so far as that is raised in thee, which the Lord maketh able to judge. But I have known several, who have spoken most gloriously and ravishingly, as to the Scriptures, opening things even to admiration, who have been out of the mystery of truth; and who have sparkled with the light and life of a wrong spirit, though they themselves knew it not to be so.

It is better with him who feels his unwillingness, and waits to be made willing by the Lord, than with him who thinks he is willing, and, upon his own search, finds and judges himself to be so. I have thought I had been willing in several cases; and that, if the Lord would have showed me his will, I should have obeyed; which I found to be otherwise, when the Lord came to lay the law of his Spirit and life upon me. This I am sure of; there is that in thee, which is not willing to be impoverished, and I cannot say concerning thee, as in God's sight, that thou art yet separated from it. Now, while it is in thee, it will be working in a mystery of deceivableness, hidden from thy heart, which thou canst not possibly discern, but as the seed is raised, and the pure light shines in thee. Thou mayest easily think better of thyself than indeed it is with thee; but it is hard for thee, in this thy present state, to know what and how thou art in the sight of the Lord.

Thou shalt know the tenderness and melting compassion

of the Lord, when *that* is broken down in thee, towards which his tenderness *is not*, and *that* raised up in thee and thy mind joined to it, towards which his tenderness *is;* but great and subtle workings are there in thy mind, from the enemy, against God's truth, which thou dost not discern and eschew, but rather embrace, as if they were true and precious. If that tenderness were ministered to thee, either from God immediately, or from us, which thou expectest and desirest (perhaps thinking thy state is wronged in not being so dealt with), it might soon destroy thee, and that for ever.

Thus, in great plainness, have I written to thee, and beseech thee to be willing, or rather to look up to the Lord to make thee willing, to have the wound kept open in thee, which the condition and state of thy soul needs; that it may be thoroughly searched, and that which is for judgment judged and destroyed; and so thy soul everlastingly saved by the everlasting Physician, who is wise and skilful in ministering both judgment and mercy to every one, according to their need.

Thy friend in true, faithful, and unfeigned love and tenderness,

I. P.

25th of First Month, 1671.

To Catherine Pordage.

Friend,

I observed yesterday, that thou didst own the light to be the principle of life; and that thou didst affirm, that those people with whom thou walkedst also owned it and directed to it. Now, it is one thing to own the principle in judgment; another thing to know it, feel its guidance, and be subject to it. It is a good step to own it in the comprehension, from the testimony without; but yet they that go so far may never come truly to know and own the thing itself. Now, nothing redeems, or can preserve, but the light and life itself. Therefore, how to meet with the thing itself,

and be changed by it into its own nature, and therein to believe, know, will, understand, and judge,—that is a skill which none can learn, but those that are taught of God, and keep close to the foundation, not rising in the high elevations above it. Ah, the humility of the seed, and of that soul that is one with the seed! Ah, how low it lies, and how weighty its sense and operations are, and how pure and infallible is its judgment! The great danger is, in rising up above the thing itself, which whoso doth, miscarrieth, whatever he hath formerly known or enjoyed.

There now springs up in my mind a state since Adam, which I would have thee seriously consider of; and then tell me, if thou hast known or heard of such another. It is recorded in Ezekiel, 28th chapter, of one that was "perfect in wisdom and beauty." In what wisdom; in what beauty? Let thy soul, if it hath understanding, answer. For he had "been in Eden, the garden of God," (what! had any been so since Adam?) "and had every precious stone for his covering." What a glorious temple then was he! yea, and he was created (by what creation?) unto this state. Yea, he was "the anointed cherub that covereth," and God had "set him so." (What is it to be the anointed, covering cherub, and to be so set by God?) He was also "upon the holy mountain of God," and "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." Yea, saith the Spirit of God further concerning him, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created." Yet after all this, "iniquity was found in" him, and the hand of the Lord turned against him. Answer me now; was this a state of mixture, or no? And if so perfect a state was liable to this, what is a state of mixture liable to?

Ah! many have had some touches of the light, some true appearances thereof, and tastes of the glory; but who hath been so united to the light, as to keep out of all that corrupteth? There is somewhat still lives near, that would fain be mixing with it, and drawing higher than the pure light of life and truth; but this leads out of the way, above the pure, the true, the innocent, the simple: and then there

is a making haste to be rich and glorious, and a departing from that poverty of spirit, wherein is the safety and preservation. How have some that have come among us, here split themselves by aspiring! Ah, what a foolish thing it is, to be found singing, before dominion is witnessed, and victory over that which captivateth: such songs will end in desolation, anguish, and confusion; for thereby the lust of the mind goes forth, and that is fed, which keeps from the victory and the dominion. It is better to know the old bottle emptied, yea, broken, than filled with new wine. And how many have taken themselves to be new made, who, when the Spirit of the Lord hath come to search them by his pure, eternal light, have been found and are found in the old nature and spirit!

Come, live no more, know no more of thyself; but wait to feel the pure seed raised to live and know in thee, and to feel its light enlightening thee, and creating a new capacity in thee; and that will give thee to bear the pain of dying, and taking up the cross, which will really slay every life, appearance, and power that is not of its own nature. Thou hast formerly taken up crosses in a way of wisdom, and according to a comprehensive knowledge and judgment; come, now, learn to take up the seed's cross in the true foolishness. For there is not another thing that gives life, than the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which truly and really slays; and to that which can discern and take up this cross, and live and walk under it, the yoke is easy and the burden light. But that must first be brought under and destroyed which counteth it hard, before it can be felt and owned to be so. If thou couldst come out of thy own wisdom and consideration of things, into the simplicity of the seed, thou wouldst soon recover thy lost ground again; and see how the enemy, with his subtlety, hath gained upon thee, and into what great danger he hath brought thy soul.

The Lord searcheth and trieth the heart, and that is the true state thereof, which his light discovereth. That is not the state, which the mind out of the light apprehendeth it to be, as we have often had experience of in ourselves.

Therefore, be still; justify not thyself, nor condemn the judgment of others, till the Lord make things manifest to thee. If it then prove better with thee than others have said, that will be thy advantage; but if thou then prove mistaken, and the judgment, which thou in thy heart hast condemned, should stand, it will be thy great loss and disadvantage.

This is in love and true friendship to thy soul, in a deeper sight of thee and sense concerning thee than thou art aware of.

I. P.

26th of Third Month, 1671.

To Nathaniel Stonar.

It is a dangerous thing to resist God's Spirit; and yet very easy for a man so to do, who hath not received a true understanding from the Lord, nor is acquainted with the leadings and outgoings of Him, who is pure. He that is tender and truly sensible may discern when he resisteth, when he quencheth, or when he grieveth the Spirit of the Lord; but he that is not truly enlightened, nor in the true sense, cannot do so. The Scribes and Pharisees, who were interpreters of the law, and very strict in outward observations and ordinances, &c., who blamed their fathers for killing the prophets, and said, if they had been in the days of the prophets, they would not have dealt so with them as their fathers did: yet, concerning these, said Stephen, "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do also resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." For, till the stiff will and stiff wisdom be brought down in a man, he cannot but resist God's Spirit, and fight for his notions and practices, according to his apprehensions of the letter, against the testimony of God's spirit and power.

Paul, who walked, according to the letter of the law, blameless, yet resisted the Spirit which gave forth the law. He must know the Spirit, receive the Spirit, live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and not fulfil the lusts of the

flesh, who would not be found resisting God's Spirit. He who is indeed turned to the redeeming arm, to Christ, the power of God, and gathered into the power, and dwelleth in the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, and is taught and led by him from path to path, and from pasture to pasture, as the Lamb, the Shepherd, goes before and guides him,—he is preserved from grieving the Holy Spirit, which moves and draws, instructs and quickens, all that are born of God. But he that is only in the letter, and in the form of godliness, out of the inward life and power, he is of that birth, mind, nature, and spirit, which cannot but resist God's Spirit. He knoweth not, he heedeth not, His drawings, His movings; His light, His life,—the way thereof,—either in his own heart, or in the hearts of others; and so walks in a way of rebelling against, and resisting Him, who is the only Saviour and Redeemer of the soul. See Job xxix. 3, 4. and xxiv. 13. Oh that thou mightst learn to wait aright to learn these things! and come into the true sense and discerning of the Spirit and power of the Lord, that thou mightst not any more resist it, neither in thyself, nor in others.

The Lord open thy heart, and lay thy spirit low before him; that thou mayst come into a right sense and judgment, concerning the state of thine own soul; and mayst experience the Lord manifesting things to thee, as indeed they are.

I. P.

15th of Fifth Month, 1671.

POSTSCRIPT.

O FRIEND!

Wait to receive an understanding from the Lord, that thou mayst come truly to know, whether thou hast resisted God's Spirit, or no; that thou lose not the advantage of making peace with thy adversary, while thou art in the way with him.

I would not have thee deceived about that virtue, life and power, which redeems the soul. For there is no other Re-

deemer, besides the Lord Jesus Christ, and he redeems by the grace of his Spirit, and by faith in his blood, which cleanseth from sin; which blood is sprinkled on the consciences of those that believe,—and that not in the darkness, but in the light; as is said in 1 John i. 7. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Under the law, the blood of bulls and goats was sprinkled outwardly, on the outward things, which sanctified to the purifying of the outward things; but under the gospel, the blood of the Lamb is sprinkled inwardly, upon inward and heavenly things. See Heb. ix. 13, 14. and 22, 23. and chap. x. 22. and xii. 24. Oh that thou didst truly and understandingly know the difference, between *thy own* applying Chirst's blood to thyself, *and the Lamb's sprinkling it upon thee, and washing thy soul therein!* Rev. i. 5. and also between *thy own* believing, according to thy own apprehension of things, and *his giving thee to believe* in the light of his Spirit! and between *thy own* praying in thy own spirit, and *his giving thee to pray* in his Spirit!

Ah! the Truth of our God is precious! the knowledge of his Christ, precious! It is a precious thing, to have the Son revealed by the Father to the renewed mind. God himself is the teacher, in the new covenant, of all the true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ; and oh how do the teachings of his Spirit differ, from all the knowledge and learning men can attain unto of themselves! The Lord give thee the true understanding; and to know what it is to begin thy religion in his Spirit; and batter down and bring to nought the understanding in thee which is not true; that thou mayst not find thy soul deeply deceived at last, as to the true knowledge of Christ and mysteries of God's kingdom,—and so perish for ever!

This, in very dear, true, and tender love, from him, who most sincerely and heartily wisheth well to thee.

L. P.

17th of Fifth Month, 1671.

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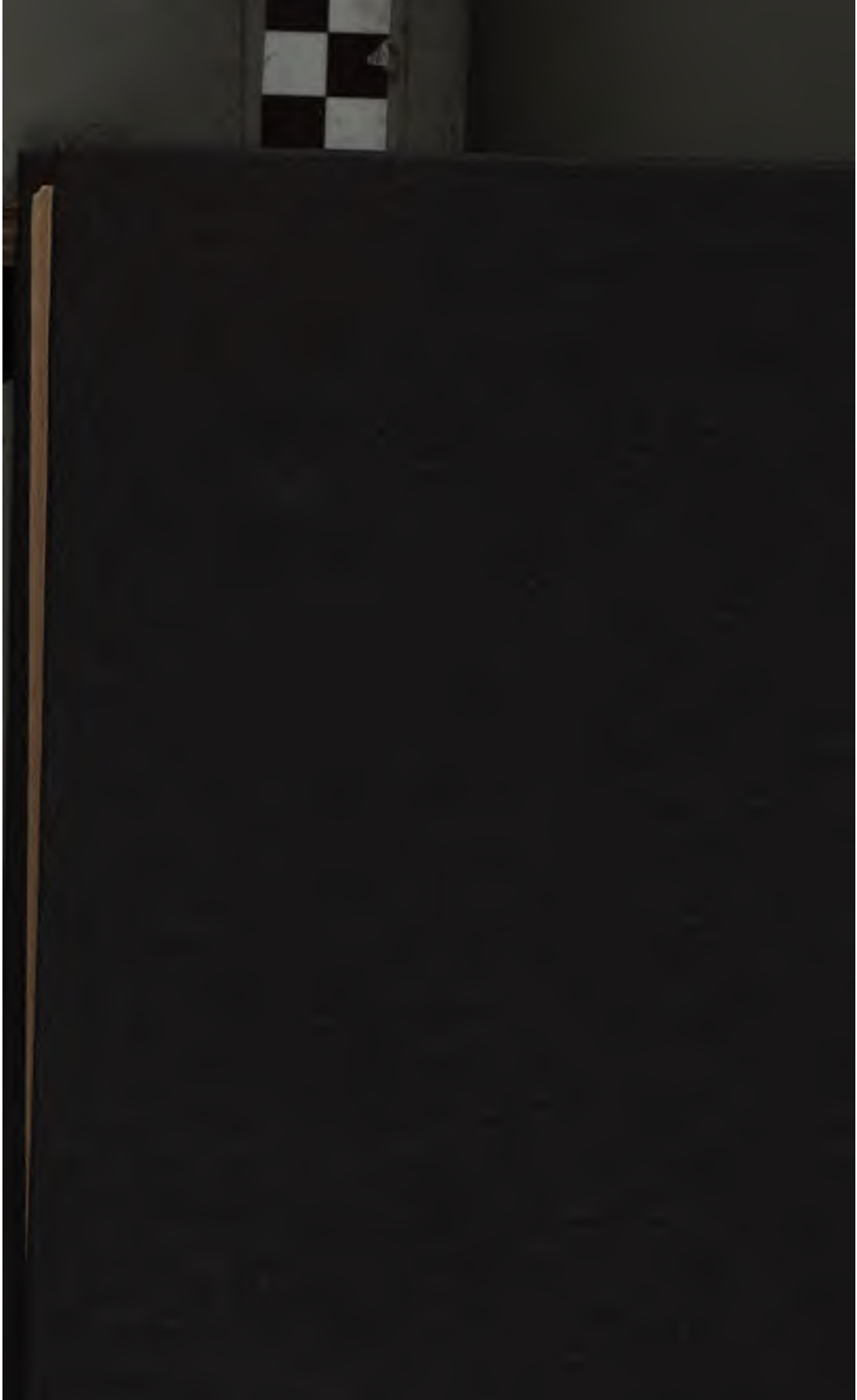
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